United Nations S PV.4460 (Resumption 1)

Security Council

Fifty-seventh year

Provisional

4460th meeting

Tuesday, 29 January 2002, 3 p.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Gayan	(Mauritius)
Members:	Bulgaria	Mr. Tafrov
	Cameroon	Mr. Belinga-Eboutou
	China	Mr. Wang Yingfan
	Colombia	Mr. Valdivieso
	France	Mr. Levitte
	Guinea	Mrs. Camara
	Ireland	Ms. O'Donnell
	Mexico	Mr. Marin Bosch
	Norway	Mr. Traavik
	Russian Federation	Mr. Lavrov
	Singapore	Mr. Mahbubani
	Syrian Arab Republic	Mr. Wehbe
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Baroness Amos
	United States of America	Mr. Negroponte

Agenda

The situation in Africa

Letter dated 10 January 2002 from the Permanent Representative of Mauritius to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2002/46)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-178.

02-23497 (E)

The meeting was resumed at 3.10 p.m.

The President: In view of the long list of speakers for this afternoon, I would like to appeal to all speakers to be as brief and concise as possible when making their statements. I trust that I can count on participants' understanding and cooperation.

Mr. Valdivieso (Colombia) *(spoke in Spanish)*: My delegation welcomes the opportunity to hold this public meeting of the Security Council on the situation in Africa. We are honoured by your presence, Mr. Minister, to lead this meeting, and also by the participation of the Foreign Ministers of member and non-member countries of the Council who are here with us.

We are also grateful for the introductory statement by the Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations, and also for the very valuable contribution to our understanding of Africa and its hopes for peace made by Mr. Amara Essy, Secretary-General of the Organization of African Unity (OAU). We also welcome the presence of the President of the Economic and Social Council, the Permanent Representative of Croatia.

The Members of the United Nations, by virtue of the Millennium Declaration, issued by our heads of State and Government in 2000, have undertaken the imperative commitment to respond to the special needs of Africa. Our commitment was reflected very explicitly in that Declaration:

> "We will support the consolidation of democracy in Africa and assist Africans in their struggle for lasting peace, poverty eradication and sustainable development, thereby bringing Africa into the mainstream of the world economy." *(resolution 55/2, para. 27)*

For the Colombian delegation, this commitment summarizes the challenges involved in Africa's complete integration into the international community. The exercise of democracy, the eradication of poverty and the preservation of peace — these are three tasks that the peoples of Africa have entrusted to their political leaders and that we must all support, so that the development of Africa and the benefits of peace will be a victory achieved by the peoples of Africa themselves.

I would now like to emphasize a few aspects that the Security Council could promote in its endeavour of maintaining international peace and security, which we believe to be relevant to today's debate.

The first aspect is conflict prevention. We welcome the fact that the OAU Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution, established in 1993, retains its relevance as the principal catalyst of Africa's efforts for the management of African conflicts. We believe that the Mechanism can strengthen its own capacity to prevent conflicts through, inter alia, greater coordination with the United Nations and subregional organizations; the establishment of short-term political and military missions for fact-finding in potential conflict situations and for building trust among the parties; and implementation by the OAU of the measures envisaged at the Harare Summit of 1997 and the Algiers Summit of 1999 against Governments that attempt to take power or stay in power by unconstitutional means.

The second aspect is peacekeeping operations. While the primary responsibility to ensure international peace and security rests with the Security Council, we value and encourage the peacekeeping operations established by regional and subregional organizations of Africa, such as the Economic Community of West African States and the Southern African Development Community; they have better knowledge of the area and are promoted by leading countries of each region. In this respect, the Council could encourage, inter alia, the use of Chapter VIII of the Charter for actions that require broad support of the international community and could promote the possibility of incorporating United Nations civilian components in African peacekeeping operations, as this would represent a measure of growing confidence in African efforts.

The third aspect is actions against the proliferation of small arms. This is a subject of great importance to our delegation. In Africa, 100 million small arms are circulating, a great many of them supplied years ago by the protagonists of the cold war in their eagerness to maintain their spheres of influence. Many weapons have survived the peace agreements and are used in post-conflict stages by bands of criminals, mercenary groups in various countries and persons concerned about their own safety. For this reason, the Council could, among other measures, urge arms-exporting countries to exercise greater control over their sales abroad; request arms-producing companies to provide technical and financial assistance to counteract their effects, as suggested by

various organizations; support with concrete actions the Moratorium proclaimed on the acquisition of small arms in West Africa; and promote the public identification of international arms dealers and of their activities, in particular those who are in clear violation of the embargoes established by the Council.

Fourthly, attention must be devoted to countries emerging from conflict. The relationship between the promotion of peace and economic development, especially at the stage of rebuilding societies affected by conflict, is widely recognized. It is one of the considerations involved in the launching of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), which was agreed on at the OAU summit last July in Zambia.

For this reason, my delegation wishes, at this meeting on Africa, to endorse the proposal to establish, within the Economic and Social Council, a special advisory group on those countries emerging from conflict. That proposal received the support of the ministers participating in the high-level segment of the Economic and Social Council devoted to the needs of Africa, which was held in July of last year.

It is to be hoped that this will be an opportunity to achieve the coordination that should exist among United Nations organs with a view to addressing post-conflict situations and to request further contacts in order to bring together the members of the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council in the interests of peace in Africa. For this reason, I should like to emphasize once again that the presence of the President of the Economic and Social Council at this meeting is of particular importance.

During its term on the Security Council, my country would not wish to see its name linked to the premature withdrawal of United Nations missions from African countries in conflict in which adequate arrangements have not yet been made for economic reconstruction.

Fifthly, and lastly, with respect to Africa's humanitarian needs, I wish to recall here the special needs of the 15 million refugees and internally displaced persons, as well as of the 30 million persons infected with the HIV/AIDS virus, who live in Africa. I do so in order to draw attention to the magnitude of this humanitarian emergency and to the need for all of our countries to respond to the appeal for contributions made by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.

Programmes amounting to $1.2 billion have been put forward to meet the immediate needs of 14.6 million persons this year. However, under 50 per cent of last year's requirements were met by international donors. In countries such as Angola, the Sudan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Burundi, there are many more people who require emergency assistance, but international relief organizations do not have access to them due to the lack of the necessary guarantees for the provision of that assistance.

In today's conditions of conflict in Africa, preventing war, as Secretary-General Kofi Annan has said, does not mean defending States or protecting allies; it means defending humanity itself.

The President: I thank the representative of Colombia for the kind words he addressed to me.

Mr. Wang Yingfan (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): At the outset, Sir, allow me, on behalf of the Foreign Minister of China, Mr. Tang Jiaxuan, to thank you for presiding over this meeting and to welcome Mr. Amara Essy, Secretary-General of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), as well as distinguished guests from other countries and regional organizations, to today's meeting. I would also like to express my appreciation to the delegation of Mauritius for convening this public meeting and for preparing the "Guidelines" document.

Peace and development in Africa have always been matters of great concern to the Security Council. The United Nations has achieved varying degrees of progress in its peacekeeping efforts in Sierra Leone, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and on the Ethiopia-Eritrea border, inter alia. The recently declared official end of the civil war in Sierra Leone, for example, is attributable partly to the United Nations peacekeeping role there.

At the same time, however, we can see that in some areas of the African continent, which are still plagued by armed conflicts, poverty, disease and other problems, the situation remains grave. Today's meeting is an opportunity for the Security Council to engage in a direct exchange of views with representatives of the OAU and of African countries on the issue of Africa. This is very important to the strengthening of communication, cooperation and coordination between the Security Council and the OAU, with a view to finding solutions to the problems of Africa.

Here I should like to share with the Council my views on the following points.

First, ours is a world of diversity, of which the African continent is an important part. After long and unremitting efforts, most African countries won national independence by the middle of the twentieth century. However, due to years of colonialism and for other reasons, their economic foundations remain extremely weak; the level of their peoples' education is relatively low; and their socio-economic development has been hampered by many factors.

After winning independence, many African countries travelled a difficult path, full of twists and turns. At present, Africa, like many other places, also faces the twin tasks of achieving peace and development. However, on the African continent these tasks have unique characteristics. Many aspects must be taken into account: its history, the relations between countries and ethnic groups, and socio-economic realities. We believe, therefore, that when discussing and seeking a solution to the African issue, we should never forget the realities in Africa or neglect its unique characteristics.

In 1998, the Secretary-General submitted his report on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa, in which he put forward, in the light of the root causes of African conflicts, a series of ideas and recommendations on ways of establishing durable peace and of promoting economic development in Africa. He highlighted in his report the fact that the international community must summon the political will and take concrete action to intervene where it can to have an impact and invest where resources are needed. We fully agree with the Secretary-General on this point.

The Millennium Summit clearly identified as a priority the issue of peace and development in the African region. The Declaration and Programme of Action adopted at last year's World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance stressed that poverty and economic disparities are closely related to racism and racial discrimination; that they have also contributed significantly to the underdevelopment of developing countries, especially in Africa; and that they are among the root causes, as well as the consequences, of armed conflicts.

After the events of 11 September, the international community has come to realize that poverty and armed conflicts are also causes of terrorism. We believe that only by increasing development aid to African countries and helping them develop their economies and eradicate poverty can we lay a solid foundation for a comprehensive solution to African conflicts. The aforementioned report of the Secretary-General and the Millennium Declaration have already provided many proposals and concrete objectives in this regard. The most important thing now is when and how to translate them into real action.

Thirdly, the OAU and other African subregional organizations are working hard to resolve African regional conflicts and to promote economic development in that continent.

As a primary organ for maintaining world peace and security, the Security Council has the responsibility of resolving the problem of African conflicts.

Therefore, we fully support the Security Council in its strengthening of cooperation and coordination with the OAU and subregional organizations and in its paying more attention to the will of the African people in the process of resolving regional conflicts, so as to formulate relevant strategies to that end. The Council should consider institutionalizing its dialogue with the OAU. We hope that the office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General in West Africa, to be inaugurated soon, will play a positive role in promoting cooperation between the United Nations and the Economic Community of West African States.

Fourthly, promoting peace and development in Africa and strengthening cooperation with African countries constitute an important part of China's foreign policy. In October 2000, China successfully hosted the China-Africa Forum on Cooperation, in Beijing. The senior officials' meeting and the ministerial meeting of the China-Africa Forum on Cooperation will be held in Ethiopia this year and next year, respectively. Preparations for these two meetings are proceeding smoothly. The Chinese Government has always tried to provide necessary assistance to African countries to the best of its ability. The China-Africa Forum on Cooperation has already identified areas and some projects for cooperation between the two sides.

The Chinese Government has also made a pledge on reducing and cancelling debts owed by African countries to China. By now, more than 20 countries

have signed a protocol with China on debt reduction and cancellation.

The Chinese Government also decided recently to raise the level of China's participation in standby arrangements for United Nations peacekeeping operations. This means that China will take a more active part in peacekeeping operations in Africa. The Chinese Government will, as always, continue to strengthen its cooperation with African countries and work for solutions to regional problems in Africa.

Mr. Lavrov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We join in the words of appreciation expressed at the holding of this meeting. We are pleased to see you, Sir, presiding. We also welcome the Secretary-General of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and the President of the Economic and Social Council, and we express our appreciation to all those eminent guests who have come from their capitals to participate in our discussion today.

Today's meeting is yet another reaffirmation of the serious concern of the world community about the state of affairs in the African continent and the desire to develop an effective strategy for maintaining peace and stability in Africa. It is impossible to have stable and harmonious world development if the African States, which are almost one third of the membership of the international community, remain in a fault zone of heightened political and socio-economic instability.

Sharing the conclusions of the United Nations Secretary-General on the vital link between peace and development, Russia favours developing a comprehensive approach to the resolution and prevention of conflicts, poverty eradication, ensuring development and strengthening democracy on the African continent. We need to break the vicious circle of inadequate development, social and inter-ethnic problems, political and military instability, conflicts and the breakdown of development programmes. Priority must be given to using political and diplomatic methods and to neutralizing factors which enable the emergence and the continuation of conflicts.

A key role in this regard belongs with the Africans themselves. Peacekeeping efforts of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), the Economic Community of West African States, the Southern African Development Community, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development and the mediation missions of eminent African political figures have in many cases made possible positive progress in the resolution of conflicts, and much has been said in great detail about this today. Russia favours the efforts of Africans themselves being fully bolstered by the authority of the Security Council, and through the logistical capability of the United Nations.

We support the steps being taken by the Secretary-General to expand links between the United Nations and the OAU and with subregional African organizations on issues such as the prevention and resolution of conflicts. Such links will help promote coordinated implementation in the African region of specific peace initiatives, including those relating to conflicts in the Great Lakes region and in the Mano River Basin.

Russia supports the efforts being made by the United Nations to enhance Africa's peacekeeping potential, including those areas such personnel training, the exchange of information, the holding of joint exercises, the implementation of demining programmes, and others. There is substantial potential in the United Nations standby arrangements system. The United Nations can make a significant contribution to the mobilization of international donor support for African peacekeeping efforts.

As a whole, the most logical approach is the one in which the Africans themselves determine specific goals and tasks of maintaining peace in their continent, while using any peacekeeping force in strict accordance with the Charter of the United Nations. This implies that any preventive or coercive actions, whether they be sanctions or even additional military force, must be authorized by the Security Council.

In this respect, experience shows that the Council is interested that, above all, the agreed views of the Africans themselves be taken into account in the search for ways to resolve the various problems in the continent, including those linked to the need to halt the illegal spread of small arms and light weapons and the illegal mining of and traffic in diamonds, the revenue from which finances and arms illegal anti-Government groups.

Post-conflict rehabilitation and development assistance must be an important component of the international strategy for ensuring peace and preventing conflicts on the African continent. The socio-economic and humanitarian sectors of the United Nations have significant preventive potential in this area. To make use of this potential, we need agreed

actions of the various bodies and agencies of the United Nations system, including, where necessary, by using Article 65 of the Charter of the United Nations, on cooperation between the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council.

We must strive for effective implementation in Africa of integrated United Nations programmes, combining, on one hand, mine clearance, confiscation of firearms, and demobilization and reintegration of former combatants, and, on the other hand, support for democratic institutions, social and economic reforms and national mechanisms for governance and the administration of justice.

In the post-conflict recovery stage, it is important to focus on preventing the recurrence of crises, above all through ensuring effective linkage between emergency assistance and subsequent measures to promote long-term sustainable development and social integration of the most vulnerable groups of the population. The Russian Federation is ready to continue — on the basis of open, equal and mutually advantageous partnership — to participate in international efforts to strengthen Africa's peace-building potential.

Mr. Tafrov (Bulgaria) (*spoke in French*): I wish at the outset to thank the delegation of Mauritius for having taken the initiative of organizing this public meeting on the situation in Africa. My delegation is grateful to you, Mr. Minister, for personally presiding over this meeting.

I wish to welcome Mr. Amara Essy, Secretary-General of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), and to thank him for his substantial and very useful contribution to this debate. I also welcome the ministers participating in this meeting.

Bulgaria will listen with interest to the statement of the European Union High Representative for Common Foreign and Security Policy, Mr. Javier Solana. Bulgaria is an associated member of the European Union, and we fully share the European Union's approach to security problems in Africa.

Africa has the sad privilege of often being on the agenda of the Security Council; that is true for this month as well. Over the past three decades there have been more than 30 conflicts in Africa, claiming countless victims and causing vast devastation. At present, more than 15 conflicts are under way on the continent. Statistics tell us that one fifth of Africa's population lives in war-torn regions.

Among the main causes, let me underscore the following. Very widespread underdevelopment, and the structural weakness of many African States that have been unable to develop solid institutions or a real culture of democracy. In that context, inter-ethnic, interregional and even interpersonal tension can easily turn into antagonism that often escalates into armed conflict. The fact is that one of Africa's main problems is not conflict between sovereign States, but conflict within States; conflicts that cut across States are a widespread phenomenon.

In its approach to African situations the Security Council generally takes due account of those complexities. In its efforts to devote in-depth attention to problems, it very often goes to the very limits of its Charter mandate. Thanks to the efforts of the Secretariat, coordination between the work of the Security Council and that of other United Nations organs is quite satisfactory. That is particularly true in situations where peace must be made to last by strengthening the authority of the State, of its democratic institutions and of its economy. Here, I wish to welcome the President of the Economic and Social Council, the Permanent Representative of Croatia to the United Nations, Mr. Ivan Šimonović.

Bulgaria takes a very favourable view of the contributions of so many non-governmental organizations, and welcomes the good cooperation between the United Nations and those organizations, which ought to continue. That said, the degree to which children are protected in armed conflict remains unacceptably low despite the Security Council's considerable efforts.

As for the role of Africa, my delegation endorses the still-timely conclusions set out in the report of the Secretary-General on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa, contained in document S/1998/318 of 13 April 1998. First, African countries must demonstrate the will to rely upon political rather than military responses to problems. Secondly, African countries must ensure respect for human rights and the rule of law, strengthen democratization and promote transparency in public administration. And thirdly, Africa must enact the reforms needed to promote economic recovery.

The Republic of Bulgaria welcomes the cooperation taking place between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity (OAU). We fully support their agreed activities and encourage efforts to harmonize assessments and approaches regarding conflicts in Africa; this could make it possible to enhance the effectiveness of diplomatic and other measures undertaken by the United Nations and the OAU. The establishment of a real strategic partnership between the OAU and the United Nations makes it possible to rationalize existing initiatives on the priority topics of conflict prevention, peacemaking, human rights, democracy and good governance.

I stress that better coordination between United Nations bodies on the one hand and regional and subregional organizations on the other is important for making their activities more effective. Obviously, success depends on understanding among all the main actors. Another crucial priority is that African countries themselves should take ownership of their future and their development. Here, let me mention the role of subregional organizations, which now bear new security commitments: first of all the Economic Community of West African States, as well as the Southern African Development Community, the Economic Community of Central African States and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development. Despite varying degrees of integration, we have seen in practice that they can be effective instruments for the prevention and management of conflicts. Bulgaria feels that improving continent-wide and regional integration would have a positive impact on security. That is clearly illustrated by the decisions of the OAU Lusaka Summit, which opened a new chapter in the modern history of the continent and which provided unambiguous evidence of the determination of African leaders to resolve the problems that they themselves have identified.

There can be no pre-established all-purpose recipes for mediation efforts. Very often, the endeavours of special envoys make a real difference in settling conflicts. Their ability, their personal courage and their determination merit commendation and full support from the Security Council. In that connection, I note that mediation by African personalities with the necessary political and moral standing is an invaluable tool.

Sanctions must be better targeted and adapted to each specific situation. We welcome the Security Council's important work in this area, and we are determined to participate in efforts to enhance the effectiveness of sanctions. As Chairman of the Somalia sanctions Committee, Bulgaria is ready to make a strong commitment to resolving the problems of that country.

Bulgaria is gravely concerned at the uncontrolled production, the proliferation and the illegal trade in small arms and light weapons; this continues to pose a serious challenge to Africa's stability and development. Strengthening cooperation and improving information exchange among African countries in the sphere of customs and border controls; legislation; and implementing United Nations arms embargoes: these are all elements that could create an environment less conducive to the emergence and continuation of armed conflicts.

The Security Council is making a considerable effort to improve the lot of internally displaced persons and refugees, but in Africa the large number of such persons makes that task extremely difficult. We welcome the work of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the non-governmental organizations, which often do pioneering work in the face of enormous difficulties.

Since the decolonization of the continent, the Republic of Bulgaria has a long tradition of involvement and cooperation in Africa. As a non-permanent member of the Security Council, my country will do all in its power to help our African friends to improve security on their continent.

The President: I thank the representative of Bulgaria for the kind words he addressed to me.

Mr. Belinga-Eboutou (Cameroon) (*spoke in French*): I wish at the outset, Mr. President, to ask you to accept the regrets of His Excellency Mr. François-Xavier Ngoubeyou, Minister of State for External Relations of Cameroon, who was unable to attend today's important meeting. He has asked me to convey to you his warm congratulations on your timely initiative to organize this Security Council meeting on the situation in Africa. He asked me also to express our appreciation for the manner in which your country has presided over the work of the Council during the month of January.

We convey our appreciation also to Mrs. Louise Fréchette, Deputy Secretary-General, and to Mr. Amara

Essy, Secretary-General of the Organization of African Unity (OAU). Their presence here and their opening statements reflect the international community's profound concern about the situation in Africa, as well as the commitment of the United Nations and of the OAU to a common search for appropriate solutions to the many problems facing the African continent. We are also pleased that the President of the Economic and Social Council is participating in today's discussion; that principal organ of the United Nations devoted its 2001 high-level segment to the question of Africa, and Ambassador Ivan Šimonović earlier made reference to the Ministerial Declaration adopted there.

As we begin our interactive dialogue, I should like to recall the comments made here by the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, on 15 December 1999:

> "If meetings alone could solve Africa's problems we would have none, but, alas, they do not, which is why I appreciate even more, Mr. President, the effort you have made to give this meeting a practical and operational character, aimed at making a difference not just in words but in action." (*S/PV.4081, pp. 2-3*)

Those words have lost none of their relevance — quite the contrary. I recall them because they seem to me to chart the course of today's interactive dialogue. Such a course will be one of action, if we want to restore the credibility of the Security Council in the eyes of the African people. Indeed, we hope that this dialogue will mark the beginning of a more resolute commitment by the Security Council in Africa, as in other regions of the world. To that end, it would be a good idea for us to take stock of the Council's actions with regard to Africa and to seek together concrete actions that we can implement together so as to meet the expectations of our peoples and fulfil the great hopes that they have placed in the Council and in the United Nations.

We need no further evidence of the Security Council's interest in African questions in particular. We need only recall that the debates devoted to such questions figure very largely on its agenda. Unfortunately, the results seem inversely proportional to our propensity to meet together to discuss Africa. That situation led the Council to request the Secretary-General to study ways and means by which not only the Council, but the entire Organization, could help Africa to be what it should always be: a good partner for the community of nations, and a land of peace.

That is the subject of the report of the Secretary-General in document S/1998/318, "The causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa". Welcomed unanimously by the international community, it paints an uncompromising portrait of the situation on the continent, identifies the sources and origins of conflict and, above all, sets out actions to be implemented by Africa itself and by the international community.

The solutions offered differ greatly from the simplistic analysis of the conflicts on the continent that results from looking through the distorting prism of tribalism and ethnicism. The analyses and recommendations in the report were taken up and considered at length by the ad hoc working group of the Security Council set up to consider that part of the report relating to peace and security and, later, by the Open-ended Ad Hoc Working Group set up by the General Assembly for the follow-up of the implementation of the recommendations of the report relating to development.

The efforts of the international community in implementing those recommendations have not always been equal to the requirements of the situation in Africa. The response — slow and timid, given the risk of the emergence of conflict and humanitarian crises in Africa — has often been, for Africans, a source of great frustration, particularly as they have set out, resolutely and irreversibly, on the path towards democracy and good governance and begun to undertake profound economic reforms.

It was in an attempt to remedy that state of affairs that the heads of State and Government, meeting at the Millennium Summit, undertook to assist Africa to establish democracy and good governance, to combat poverty, to support regional and subregional mechanisms for conflict prevention and to promote political stability. They also committed themselves to financing peacekeeping operations on the continent. I have mentioned only those commitments that relate most directly to the Security Council. Section VII of the Millennium Declaration, relating to Africa, deserves to be read in full. The Ambassador of Colombia earlier reminded us of that fact.

The will of our heads of State is thus clear, as are their commitments. The Security Council finds itself

challenged more than ever. Faced with our interminable speeches, the people of Africa are likely to be overcome by scepticism and doubt. What, then, are we to do?

In responding to that question, my delegation will use the working document that you, Mr. President, provided for this meeting as a basis for some proposals for action. Furthermore, we will do so in the context of the provisions of the Millennium Declaration, in particular section VII.

First, with regard to peacekeeping, the heads of State and Government of the States Members of the United Nations have undertaken, as I said earlier, to fund peacekeeping operations carried out in Africa. Under these circumstances, the people of Africa, encouraged by those assurances, are surely entitled to expect the Council to act more promptly and with greater determination in Africa. That is why we advocate adapting the mandates and financing of peacekeeping operations deployed in Africa to the complexity of the conflicts there.

The signing of peace accords bringing conflict to an end in other regions of the world is always accompanied by a financial framework to help to control and resolve any outstanding problems or problems of reconstruction. Why should that not be the case in Africa? We are pleased that the Economic and Social Council — which is concerned with the prevention of conflict and post-conflict reconstruction — is participating in this debate today.

As Cameroon has stressed, Africa, a partner of the United Nations, is an organized continent with structures able to respond to the requirements of Articles 52 and 53 of the Charter as regards the resolution of conflicts at the local level. This is particularly the case with the Council for Peace and Security in Central Africa (COPAX). This is the case at the continental level with the central Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution. It is thus important that the operational capacities of these organizations be strengthened. In this regard, too, Africa, more than any other region, is entitled to expect assistance.

Mediation efforts must be encouraged. However, we should recall, as the Secretary-General has done, the need to avoid the multiplication of competing mediation initiatives, which ultimately could cancel each other out and be counterproductive.

The United Nations willingness to contribute to Africa's effort is clear. The number of United Nations actions and operations for Africa is proof of this. However, the Organization's actions are being diluted and wasted in the absence of a clearly defined policy. Thus, there is a need to rationalize these initiatives for Africa and to define a vision and plan of action.

Cameroon today repeats the proposal it made before the Council, on 15 December 1999, to have at the level of the Secretary-General a coordination unit for the actions of departments and offices of the Secretariat. This would guarantee greater transparency and consistency of the initiatives of the international community. It would promote an integrated approach by the Secretariat to African issues and enable a better assessment of the implementation of the recommendations. This kind of structure exists for African matters at the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund.

We welcome the creation of the United Nations Office for West Africa, which we hope will play an important role for a coordinated and global approach to conflict prevention in this region of Africa. We trust that the Secretariat will create such structures in other subregions.

For a long time the Council has discussed the evolution of the sanctions regimes imposed on those who threaten peace or violate peace agreements during the resolution of a conflict. The precarious situation in which African populations live pushes us to encourage and support any policy of sanctions that targets the designated officials and spares civilian populations.

Lastly, it is necessary to make the recommendations of the Security Council on Africa more concrete so that the continent can revive hope and development. This implies a plan of action on the part of the international community directed at specific areas. In this respect, my delegation suggests that it draw inspiration from the priority areas identified by the Ministers for Foreign Affairs who met in September 1998 on the initiative of the Secretary-General in the Development Assistance Committee.

It is a question of increasing the amount of official development assistance and improving its quality. It is a question of forgiving the balance of the official bilateral debt of the poorest African countries. It is a question of increasing access to the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative; and finally

it is a question of facilitating African exports so that the continent no longer remains on the margins of the globalization process.

These are the few proposals that Cameroon is putting on the table of the Council at a time when it is meeting to establish a plan of action for cooperation in favour of Africa, in the light of the prevailing situation there and, above all, the commitments undertaken at the Millennium Summit by the family of the United Nations to respond to the special needs of Africa.

Mr. Mahbubani (Singapore): Allow me to begin by congratulating Mauritius on organizing this debate. The high level of participation and interest shows that it is timely, and we certainly agree with the comment made by the Deputy Secretary-General, Ms. Louise Fréchette, when she said earlier today that it is good to have this meeting chaired by a success story from Africa.

I would also like to welcome my old friend Minister Amara Essy and to wish him all the best as he undertakes his historic transformation. As he said, this will not be the Organization of African Unity (OAU), part 2; this will be the African Union — a different body.

The Council has covered a wide area in the debate so far, and I notice that many of our colleagues have tried to answer the many questions that you, Mr. President, have posed. But we would just like to focus on one key word: results. Indeed, the very third sentence of your paper reads, "Since both organizations" — the OAU and the United Nations — "aim at finding solutions to disputes conflicts, it is of vital importance that their actions complement one another for effective results." *(S/2002/46, annex, first paragraph)*

If I heard the Ambassador of Cameroon correctly through the interpretation, I thought at one point he also said that there seems to be an inverse ratio between meetings and results. Clearly, that is an area that we need to focus on.

We did some research for this debate, and I noticed that the last time the Council debated the situation in Africa — and I think the Ambassador of Cameroon reflected on this, too — was in December 1999, when the meeting was chaired by the then-Council President, Mr. Peter Hain, the United Kingdom's Minister of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs. Indeed, immediately after the meeting he tried to summarize what he thought were its conclusions.

This is what he said. First, he concluded that there was a broad consensus on the need to institute regular and more structured consultations and coordination within the Council and the OAU and the regional bodies. I suppose Mr. Essy's presence here is one concrete result. Secondly, he also felt that there was a need for greater political engagement from the Council in conflicts in Africa to meet especially its peacekeeping needs more quickly and effectively. Thirdly, emphasis was given to the vital importance of preventive action to address the root causes of conflict, including better early warning and exchange of analysis.

Those conclusions were relevant then. They are still relevant now. Particularly interesting are the remarks he made at the very end, when he said, "I shall ask our permanent representative to start work with others around this table to ensure action by the Council as quickly as possible ... I hope that we will see the first results within the next few weeks." *(S/PV.4081 (Resumption 1) p. 32)*

The first question on our minds is, What results have we achieved between December 1999 and January 2002? We have actually had a big problem trying to answer a simple question like that because one of the structural weaknesses of the Council — I am sorry to say this, Sir — is that there is no institutional memory. There is no linkage between one debate and another debate on the same subject. I am glad that, for example, in a technological breakthrough, this debate is being telecast live on a web site. But it would be good if you could also go to the web site and get concrete information on what we agreed on in 1999, what we have done and where else we have to go.

The absence of such knowledge means, of course that in a sense, we have to make stabs in the dark to find out what has happened. As usual, when you try to find out whether progress has been made, you find there is bad news and good news. If one wants to look for bad news, one need look no further than quoting what the report of the New Partnership for Africa's Development itself said: "The poverty and backwardness of Africa stands in stark contrast to the prosperity of the developed world." I think the Foreign Minister of Guinea made a similar comment when she

spoke today. The report adds that in Africa, half of the population lives on less than one dollar a day. The mortality rate of children under the age of five is 140 per 1000. Life expectancy at birth is only 54 years. Only 58 per cent of the population has access to safe water. The rate of literacy of people over 15 is 41 per cent. The most telling point it makes is that you need a growth rate of 7 per cent to eliminate poverty but that the current growth rate is about 3 per cent.

Clearly, if you want to refer to bad news, you can find it. But there is also good news. As we all know, in the area of conflicts, there have been significant improvements. I think several speakers have noted that the situation in West Africa today is certainly much better than it was in 1999, when, one may recall, the Revolutionary United Front was holding United Nations peacekeepers hostage. Even the situation in the Great Lakes region has improved in the last two years. Indeed, the United Nations overall has been doing a better job in the field of peacekeeping in Africa.

But even here, I want to balance what I have just said by quoting another distinguished son of the continent who now serves in the Organization Mr. Olara Otunnu, in "The Peace and Security Agenda of the United Nations", said:

> "that the United Nations should invest its political and material resources where they are needed most and where they are likely to make the greatest difference is of course understandable.
>
> "While selective engagement is perhaps a necessary response to the present realities, it also poses a serious moral predicament as a long-term policy. Under selective engagement, conflicts will inevitably fall into two categories: on the one side, those 'adopted' by the United Nations or other international organizations and, on the other, the ones that are allowed to fall between the cracks of the international system."

Clearly we cannot allow this to carry on, and we have to find a solution to this problem. But I hope that as a result of this debate, we will try at some point to come up with a concrete, comprehensive analysis as to whether we are moving forward or are moving backward in our efforts to promote peace and development in Africa.

Incidentally, I will mention as an aside that what we tried to do at the last wrap-up session, in December last year, was to look at what were the most successful and least successful files of the Security Council in an effort to try and see where we need to pay attention.

It is for this reason that we welcome your proposal, Sir, for a working group, and we hope that your proposal will be endorsed. We agree with the views expressed by the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, Baroness Amos, when she spoke earlier today and supported the working group, saying it needs "a clear mandate designed to produce concrete and deliverable outcomes within a specific time frame".

We support this emphasis on results because we ourselves have participated in many, many meetings on Africa. In the 1980s, when I had the pleasure of serving with Minister Amara Essy, I chaired meetings of the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development (UNPAAERD). Two years ago, I also chaired the meetings on the causes of conflict in Africa. So, it is clear that we have had lots of meetings on African issues. That is why it is important to remember some very wise words of Secretary-General Kofi Annan. In December 1999, when he opened the Council's debate on the situation in Africa, he made the rather pertinent remark that if meetings alone could solve problems, he believed that all of Africa's problems would have been solved by now. Clearly, we have to move beyond meetings to action.

Here, I must say I am very pleased, Sir, that you have in an important innovation encouraged the participation of the President of the Economic and Social Council. Clearly, the issues of conflict and the issues of development are interrelated, and if we are to solve the problems, we have to come together with the other agencies in the United Nations and work with them. I noticed that the Ambassador of Cameroon also suggested the importance of such coordination. This is why I will end with one final quotation, taken from a World Bank report published two years ago, entitled "Can Africa Claim the 21st Century?" The report's central message was:

> "Yes, Africa can claim the 21st century. But this is a qualified yes, conditional on Africa's ability — aided by its development partners — to overcome the development traps that kept it confined to a vicious cycle of underdevelopment, conflict and

untold human suffering for most of the 20th century."

We hope that as a result of this meeting, we will all come together.

Mr. Wehbe (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): Allow me at the outset to express to you, Sir, our great pleasure at seeing you preside over the deliberations of this important session on Africa. Allow us to congratulate your friendly country of Mauritius on its presiding wisely over the deliberations of the Council this month. I must also pay tribute to your Permanent Representative and the members of your delegation for their intensive efforts and excellent performance, especially for the initiative of holding this meeting.

My delegation would also like to express its satisfaction at the participation of Ms. Louise Frechette, the Deputy Secretary-General, in this important debate. Let us also express our satisfaction at the valuable opening remarks she made.

My delegation also welcomes the participation of Mr. Amara Essy, Secretary-General of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), in our meeting today, as well as a number of high-level African representatives. We believe that this truly reflects the utmost importance of promoting cooperation between the United Nations and the OAU in the framework of the efforts of the international community to resolve the many problems afflicting the countries of the African continent, as well as of giving due consideration to the specifics of these problems and their diverse dimensions.

Today's meeting and the high-level ministerial participation reflect the Security Council's commitment to seeking durable solutions to the many grave problems facing the African continent. We believe that dealing with these problems requires a multisectoral approach. The strategies for resolving the disputes besetting many countries in Africa must take into consideration the true causes of such conflicts, as well their economic and social dimensions.

All this is in addition to efforts to establish security and build peace in Africa, including the challenges of abject poverty and the problems of deadly epidemics, such as AIDS and malaria. It is also necessary that fair solutions be found to the burdensome problem of external debts in many of these countries.

We cannot deny that in the past few years the international community has achieved concrete success in dealing with conflicts and peace-building; nor can we ignore the grave challenges that African countries — among the least developed in the world — continue to face: sustainable development, peace-building in post-conflict situations, the prevention of new conflicts, negative repercussions due to sanctions, and refugees and internally displaced persons.

This month there have been many items pertaining to Africa on the Security Council's agenda. We are pleased to note that the peace process in Sierra Leone has achieved concrete progress, with the end of the disarmament process, and progress in the legislative and presidential elections to be held next May. We would also like to express our satisfaction at the progress made in the comprehensive peace Agreement signed in Algiers in December 2000 between Eritrea and Ethiopia. We look forward to the outcome of the deliberations of the Boundary Commission, which is to issue its ruling on the delimitation and demarcation of borders between the two countries at the end of next February in order to put an end to their border dispute. At the same time, however, we believe that more efforts ought to be made in other regions. There are other disputes to be defused, since they threaten to spread to neighbouring countries. On this subject, we believe that the following methodology should be taken up.

First, dealing with disputes in the African continent requires a comprehensive methodology based on preventive diplomacy aimed at peacekeeping and peacemaking. In this context we agree with the Secretary-General's statement in his periodic report entitled "The causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa", which he presented to the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly, that the United Nations should move from a culture of reaction to conflict towards a culture of preventing conflict. We believe that an ounce of prevention is worth more than a pound of cure, and that long-term strategies are required to prevent conflict and to build peace. We believe that such strategies should take into consideration the root causes of conflict and the link between sustainable development and peace. Even when peace accords are reached, there is still need to mobilize and coordinate the efforts of international institutions and donors in peace-building. Failure to provide the necessary

financial resources and to achieve economic revival carries grave dangers, namely, a return to conflict. Perhaps the problems faced by many African countries in the beginning stages of peace-building — demobilization and reintegration of former combatants and the absence of necessary financial resources — are the best proof of that. This morning we heard the Foreign Minister of the Democratic Republic of the Congo express his country's grave concern. We also heard many comments on the importance of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) in other countries.

Secondly, there is an urgent need for the greatest possible coordination and cooperation between the United Nations and the OAU when dealing with conflicts in Africa, as well as for regular consultation between the two organizations. We believe that there is a need to continue promoting African capabilities in the maintenance of peace with a view towards building an effective partnership with the United Nations. We are pleased that cooperation with the OAU and subregional organizations in the prevention, management and settlement of conflicts has had positive results in West Africa, the Great Lakes region and the Horn of Africa. Progress in implementing the many recommendations within the United Nations that the Secretary-General referred to in his above-mentioned report will surely improve prospects for solving a larger number of conflicts in Africa.

Thirdly, there is a need for regional and subregional strategies in dealing with many conflicts having a regional dimension. Perhaps the challenges confronting the Mano River Union countries point this out rather well. The issues of refugees, illegal trafficking in small arms and DDR programmes are all inter-linked in the region. Failure to tackle these issues comprehensively carries the threat of widening conflict among the States of the region. We hope that progress will be made in promoting subregional initiatives for peace and development, for institutional linkages and confidence-building and for complementary policies in the political, humanitarian, development and security fields.

Fourthly, there is an urgent need to consider appropriately the negative repercussions of long-term economic sanctions imposed on African countries that are among the poorest and least developed in the world. We do not believe that the imposition of such sanctions can contribute positively over the medium- and long-term to the eradication of the causes of conflict or towards stability in these countries. On the contrary, we believe that they will only increase poverty and tension.

Fifthly, we believe that the commitment of African leaders to the New Partnership for Africa's Development deserves the full support of the donor community. It offers an appropriate opportunity to analyse and assess the prospects for development and to set agreed objectives. We believe that the success of such an initiative requires the serious support and commitment of the international community to providing resources and necessary expertise. The Economic and Social Council stressed this issue at its most recent substantive meeting in Geneva through the Ministerial Declaration issued at the high-level segment from 16 to 18 July 2001, which was presided over by the Permanent Representative of Cameroon. We were very pleased in that regard by the participation in today's meeting of Ambassador Ivan Šimonović, President of the Economic and Social Council, who made an important contribution to the drafting of the Declaration and is now responsible for its follow-up.

The commitment of the international community, in addition to that of African leaders to achieving the objectives they set for themselves, are two essential preconditions for meeting the challenges of peace and development in Africa, which are complementary and interlinked. In that regard, we believe that the establishment of the African Union is a promising opportunity to rebuild the African continent on a firm and methodical basis, allowing it to join the mainstream of globalization. We share the opinion that peace is an essential prerequisite of economic and social progress, which in turn is necessary to a life of peace and stability in Africa, so long as the root causes of African conflicts are addressed and development prospects are found that can lead to the necessary solutions to the problems of poverty and disease and to economic growth.

In conclusion, we hope that this important exchange of opinions today will give new impetus to efforts to rebuild a continent of such promise, wealth, resources and potential on the basis of peace, cooperation, sustainable development and non-marginalization so that it may join the mainstream of globalization and benefit from it. We hope that the Security Council and the United Nations will not fail to

assist Africa to contain and manage its crises in order to promote peace and security in that great continent, particularly since there are many resolutions, mechanisms, declarations and programmes that we believe to be adequate to address African crises. However, this will require genuine political will. A number of valuable proposals have been made this morning and this afternoon that we feel should be set out in a single list for the consideration and follow-up of the Security Council, which might devote a special meeting to making it an operational reality.

Mr. Levitte (France) (*spoke in French*): France thanks you, Sir, for presiding personally over this meeting. We also thank Mauritius for having taken the initiative of convening this public debate on Africa, a continent central to the Security Council's concerns and commitment. I welcome the presence of our friend Mr. Amara Essy, Secretary General of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), who embodies the hopes for the African Union. I would like to express our gratitude to the ministers who have done us the honour of joining us at this table and to Ambassador Ivan Šimonovic, President of the Economic and Social Council.

Later in the debate, Mr. Javier Solana, whom I welcome, will deliver a speech on behalf of the European Union, with which France fully aligns itself.

Africa has made indisputable progress over the past few years in regard to both entrenching democracy and economic development. However, numerous conflicts, domestic and inter-State, are slowing and eclipsing the gains. That is why, at the request of African leaders, the Security Council has progressively agreed to become engaged there in a partnership for peace and security. It is a partnership that requires all the instruments of intervention available to the Council.

First of all, there is conflict prevention. In the interests of discretion, it is usually the Secretary-General who commits the authority of his office, calling on the parties concerned to seek a peaceful solution. When it believes the moment to be ripe, however, our Council does not hesitate to act. It did so, for example, in May 2000 by going to Addis Ababa and Asmara to try to prevent war between Ethiopia and Eritrea and to plead for the implementation of the OAU Framework Agreement approved in Algiers. It was in that spirit, too, that our Council issued yesterday an important statement on Madagascar, as was done by the OAU previously.

The Council, of course, fully supports the initiatives of the OAU and subregional organizations to prevent conflicts. I am thinking in particular of the early warning observatories of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development. I have in mind, too, the moratorium on small arms in West Africa and, to cite something more immediate, the proposed meeting of the three heads of State of the Mano River Union.

More often, however, our Council is invited to act in conflict resolution in support of efforts begun by the Africans themselves under the auspices of the OAU and subregional organizations. Today, it is important to welcome the success of the peace operation led by the United Nations, in conjunction with ECOWAS, in Sierra Leone. With more than 17,000 soldiers deployed, the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone is currently the largest Blue Helmet operation. As a result, 43,000 combatants have been disarmed and demobilized. On the strength of this achievement, we can organize elections which will put a final end to 10 years of conflict. There has been too much talk of the United Nations failures not to focus now on this promising development. We are all determined to conduct this operation to complete success.

In the Horn of Africa, 4,000 United Nations soldiers are supervising the Peace Agreement between Ethiopia and Eritrea. Our Council will soon be sending an important mission there to help resolve outstanding problems. It will prepare the way, we hope, for the unfaultable implementation by the two countries of the Boundary Commission's decisions on the demarcation of the border.

We must turn our attention again to Somalia. The country has been abandoned by everyone for too long. The hopes born of the Arta process have unfortunately not been realized, and the Council must now throw its full weight behind the initiative taken by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) heads of State at their recent meeting in Khartoum. As soon as circumstances permit, arrangements must be made for the United Nations to return to Mogadishu.

In Burundi, the Council supported the initiatives of Presidents Nyerere and Mandela. France welcomes the assistance of South African troops in the

implementation of the Arusha Accord. It supports the regional initiative and calls on the rebel movements to return without delay to the peace process. Next week, the Council will have the opportunity to make a detailed and particularly timely review of this question with President Buyoya.

But it is perhaps in the Democratic Republic of the Congo that the Council has invested most, and rightly so. In three years, the conflict there, in which seven neighbouring States are involved, has claimed 2.5 million Congolese lives. Through a series of meetings, a trusting partnership has been established between the Council and all the signatories of the Lusaka Accord. We are determined to continue our action until peace is achieved. We shall be unflagging in our resolve. As I said before Minister She Okitundu this morning, the time has surely come to consider, with our African partners, the objectives of a new Council mission that could go to the Great Lakes region in the spring.

Altogether, peacekeeping operations in Africa involve more than half the total number of Blue Helmets deployed throughout the world, at a cost of more than $1.5 billion. This shows the extent to which Africa is an absolute priority for the Council.

As a complement to diplomatic efforts and the deployment of peacekeeping troops, the Council has made better use of the instrument of sanctions. They were imposed on UNITA and the Revolutionary United Front (RUF), and proved effective because they were carefully targeted and associated with clear-cut political objectives. Most of the sanctions now have time limits, and their implementation is regularly evaluated and monitored by panels of independent experts. This is how the Council brought to light the key role played by the trafficking in arms and highly valuable natural resources in the perpetuation of conflicts in Africa, from Sierra Leone to the Democratic Republic of the Congo and from Liberia and Angola. We must further increase our pressure to halt instances of such trafficking, which are inter-related. From this perspective, France is proposing the creation of a permanent follow-up mechanism on the application of Security Council embargoes. A unit of independent experts could be established under the supervision of the Security Council and sanctions committees. France will submit a text on this subject to its partners in the next few days.

The promising partnership between the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and the Security Council has been steadily expanded to other institutions. In the face of complex conflicts, the Council has elaborated exit strategies that include a military component, certainly, but also the necessary reconstruction of the State, the economy and the society of the countries concerned. To implement these coherent strategies, we have learned to work with the World Bank and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). This is the case in Sierra Leone. It should also be the case in Burundi and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. All donors can make a decisive contribution to the success of these two peace processes by making an immediate commitment. It is essential that the ravaged peoples of these two countries receive now the dividends of the peace to come. Only these global strategies will make possible the lasting progress of good governance and human rights.

It is in this context that a proposal has been made to create a working group on Africa. The idea seems interesting to us, and it will be necessary for Council members to consider the particular mandate that might be conferred on this group.

France is resolutely committed to all of these matters. The ties formed by history account for our position, but there is another reason behind it. For France, Africa is a matter of the heart. That is why, more than 40 years after the wave of independence, France remains the leading donor of bilateral aid to the African continent, providing it with $4.5 billion in 2000. In addition, it has cancelled debt on a huge scale, amounting to more than $8 billion.

France is also determined to continue its efforts to promote peace, together with the OAU and the Security Council. It has 5,800 troops on the African continent today, in Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Djibouti, Gabon and Senegal, at the request of those countries. But France now wishes to help the Africans themselves handle security problems. Our Reinforcement of African Peacekeeping Capacities programme (RECAMP) is helping to train and equip African units that can be placed under United Nations command. That is the case, for example, with the Senegalese contingents that today serve with the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

More generally, France welcomes the determination of African heads of State to take in hand the development of their continent. We have already expressed our support for the African initiative, the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). On 8 February in Paris, President Chirac will convene a meeting of about a dozen African heads of State and Government and the President of the OAU in order to review the work done within the framework of NEPAD, with a view to the G-8 Summit in Kananaskis.

There is no doubt that France, with the OAU today, the African Union tomorrow, and the Security Council, is and will remain by the side of the African countries that wish to move forward towards peace and development.

Mr. Negroponte (United States of America): Thank you, Mr. President, for taking the initiative to organize this Council meeting on the situation in Africa and also for inviting Organization of African Unity (OAU) Secretary General Essy to join us for this discussion. Through you, we express our thanks to him for his thoughtful remarks that provide the framework for today's meeting.

We also welcome the contributions of the ministers who travelled to New York to join us today, as well as those of the other representatives of the interested States participating in today's debate, including the President of the Economic and Social Council, Ambassador Ivan Šimonović.

I agree with many of my Council colleagues that we need such debates to keep the world's attention focused on Africa's conflicts and challenges. And I am here today to say, on behalf of my Government, that Africa matters to the United States, both by history and by choice. Let me share with you a few figures that illustrate this relationship. We have almost 35 million citizens of African descent. Last year, trade between the United States and Africa amounted to nearly $30 billion, and America is Africa's largest single market.

The United States is the leading foreign investor in Africa, and more than 30,000 Africans are studying in the United States today.

My Government has demonstrated this commitment in a number of ways. Secretary of State Powell travelled to Africa last spring on one of the first major trips of his tenure. Since his inauguration, President Bush has held discussions with numerous African heads of State. He appointed Senator John Danforth to be a special envoy to the Sudan. The President and the Administration are implementing the African Growth and Opportunity Act, as a roadmap for how the United States and Africa can tap the power of markets to improve the lives of our citizens. This confirms what Secretary of State Powell told a group of university students during his trip to Africa, when he promised "to enthusiastically engage with Africa on behalf of the American people."

While the United States is currently mobilized, together with its allies around the world, to defeat global terrorism, my Government remains no less committed to Africa. Just last week, as part of a global response to the devastating volcano eruption in the Goma region of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the United States dispatched two planeloads of relief supplies, seismographic equipment and relief experts, along with emergency food aid.

In fact, when addressing the African Growth and Opportunity Forum this past October, President Bush told members of that community that after 11 September, in an era of global trade and global terror, "we share the same threats, and we share the same goals — to forge a future of more openness, trade and freedom."

Addressing these kinds of global threats and achieving these goals requires global organization. The United Nations and the Security Council are crucial to achieving our common priorities and goals in Africa. The United Nations allows the United States to join with other Member countries to marshal the world's contributions of resources and efforts to maximum effect.

For that reason, the United States is an active participant in all United Nations efforts to assist Africa. We particularly support the work of the Council to promote peace and stability where they are threatened on the continent.

The United States assisted the United Nations and the OAU in playing a mediating role in the December 2000 peace agreement between Ethiopia and Eritrea. We see this as a model for future cooperation between the Council and regional organizations.

We fully support the United Nations peacekeeping missions in the Congo and in Sierra Leone, and we are one of the largest donors to the

United Nations Trust Fund for the Special Court in Sierra Leone. United States aid agencies closely cooperate with the peace-building missions in Guinea-Bissau, Angola and the Central African Republic. Through "Operation Focus Relief", we are helping to prepare seven West African battalions for peacekeeping service in Sierra Leone.

Looking beyond these immediate conflicts, we support Africa's own regional efforts through the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) to develop greater African peacekeeping capability.

In addition to promoting peace, the United States also supports an active United Nations role in the fight against Africa's most pressing health crisis, HIV/AIDS. We believe that this disease presents a real threat to peace and security in Africa. Demonstrating the United States' commitment to this issue, Secretary Powell led the United States delegation to the United Nations special session on HIV/AIDS, hosted here in New York last June. In 2002, the United States will, through a combination of bilateral assistance programmes and support for the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), contribute more than half a billion dollars to the fight against that disease.

While the United Nations plays an important role in addressing Africa's concerns, the United States shares the view of other members here today that there is no substitute for healthy nation-States and a dynamic regional organization in promoting peace and security on the continent.

We recognize, however, that, when it comes to ending Africa's disastrous wars, there sometimes may be limits to what regional organizations can realistically achieve on their own. In those cases where the Council can bolster regional and national efforts, we think greater cooperation could be useful. We encourage the United Nations liaison office to the OAU, for example, to consult with the Council, when it would be useful, on actions taken by the OAU's Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution to address conflicts in Africa.

There are instances, we believe, in which the Council, joined by African States and regional organizations, must be willing to clearly state where responsibility lies.

The Council must give all sides in African conflicts the opportunity to accept negotiated settlements, but, if one side conclusively proves its bad faith, the Council must break out of impartiality. We must have the support of African Governments and regional organizations in doing so.

The lesson the United States draws from several current African conflicts is that when the Council and African Governments are clear about who bears responsibility for war in Africa, it bolsters our efforts to end that aggression.

In Sierra Leone, for example, when the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) betrayed its promises, the Council was clear in its condemnation of who was responsible and in taking action against the RUF's backer, Liberia.

That clear expression by the Council of who is at fault for the breakdown of peace and our imposition of sanctions on the responsible party produced the progress we are now welcoming in Sierra Leone.

While the efforts of the Council, regional groups and individual States have certainly not brought a conclusive end to all of the continent's wars, for the first time in many years there is cause for cautious optimism regarding many of these conflicts. In every case, however, progress in ending these conflicts required first and foremost that African leaders and Governments take bold steps for peace. Sustaining this progress will require equally bold steps to strengthen democracy, governance and the rule of law in Africa.

Building good governance and strengthening the rule of law are pressing challenges and are crucial to maintaining lasting peace in Africa. The OAU and the African subregional organizations are making useful contributions to this effort. The OAU took a historic step when it decided to refuse to seat Governments that come to power via unconstitutional means. This had a positive impact in countries such as Côte d'Ivoire and the Comoros islands.

Finally, let me say a few words about the new challenge that faces this Council, Africa, and all the nations of the world — our shared campaign against terrorism.

The eleventh of September brought back to my Government that terrible day in August 1998 when Osama bin Laden and the Al-Qaeda network attacked our embassies in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam. We are

grateful for the political support offered by the Organization of African Unity and by many African regional organizations. We appreciate the basing and overflight rights offered by African countries and the growing number of African nations that have committed to cracking down on terrorist financing.

We must work together to prevent the establishment of safe havens, training camps or bases of operation for Al-Qaeda in Africa.

In conclusion, let me say that the United States Government wants a responsive, relevant Security Council that is ready to join with African leaders prepared to take bold action in support of peace. But it is important to underscore that we — this Council and the United States in its bilateral efforts — can only foster change in Africa. We cannot command it.

African Governments and leaders themselves have to sustain the efforts needed to end the conflicts on the continent. We look to African leaders to demonstrate the political courage and statesmanship necessary to end corruption, respect the rule of law and seek peaceful ends to the continent's wars. Only by doing so can African Governments, and the people of Africa, benefit from the Security Council's actions in support of peace and security in Africa.

The President: I shall now make a statement in my capacity as representative of Mauritius.

Allow me at the outset to express, on behalf of my country, our deepest grief and sympathy over the tragedies that the people and the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo have endured in the aftermath of the volcanic eruption in Goma. Our sympathy and condolences also go to the Government and the people of Nigeria over the huge loss of lives caused by the bomb explosions of a military arms depot in Lagos.

We highly appreciate the presence of those attending this special meeting on Africa and for the quality and content of their contributions. I would like to extend a special and very warm welcome to the Secretary-General of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), Mr. Amara Essy, whose presence here will hopefully develop into a permanent feature for consultation between the Security Council and the African Union in the days to come.

Individually African countries have occupied and will continue to occupy the time and attention of the Security Council. This meeting, however, is a unique opportunity for the Council to address the issues of the continent as a package. What is of interest to us in these consultations is not the past, but what the future holds for Africa, a continent abundant in natural and mineral resources and yet desperately awaiting the attention and firm commitment and support of the international community in the field of political, economic and technological development.

Africa as a whole has unanimously condemned the terrorist attacks of 11 September, and we are committed to taking all measures to eradicate not only the terrorists, but also the sources of terrorism. With the war against terror being won and with Afghanistan on the road to reconstruction, we consider, however, that the time has come to reactivate the spotlight on Africa.

It is important to know that Africa is ready to undo the errors of the past and to shed the image of doom and gloom, which unfortunately keeps being projected throughout the world. The new breed of African leaders has the determination and the political courage to confront the truth and reality, however painful and harsh they may be.

We are encouraged by the efforts of the international community to address the root causes of conflicts in Africa, as identified in the report of the Secretary-General on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa. We also note, however, that the provisions of Security Council resolutions 1170 (1998) and 1197 (1998) are yet to be implemented. We therefore propose that an ad hoc working group composed of Council members be set up to look into the implementation aspects, as well as the enhancement of cooperation and coordination between the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council.

We are concerned by the linkages of conflicts with the illicit proliferation of small arms and light weapons, with the illegal exploitation of natural resources and with the lack of success of sanctions regimes. We believe that the time has come for finalizing the review process on the sanctions regimes. In spite of the sanctions against it, UNITA still has the capability of carrying out terrorist acts, causing the deaths of hundreds of civilians. But at the same time, it is important that the collateral effects of sanctions on civilian populations be seriously studied.

Before I go further, allow me to say that we are comforted by the interest that the G-8 has shown in addressing the immense problems that afflict Africa. While we welcome the attention, we wish to make it absolutely clear that Africa has undertaken major reassessments of an infinite variety of issues, with the result that a political transformation of the highest order is now in place. We are confident that the mistakes of the past will not be repeated and that the blueprint, as set out in the Constitutive Act of the African Union, as well as in the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), will not be departed from.

Unfortunately, the boundless optimism that accompanied the independence of African countries is matched only by the scale of the frustration of that optimism. Many African heroes who fought for liberation rapidly succumbed to the temptations of lifelong presidencies, destroying in the process all that remained of a multiparty political system. From 1960 to date, more than 80 coups, 24 political assassinations and about 100 attempted coups are the legacy of our continent. Coups d'état or assassinations became the only mode of changing Governments in many countries. That, unfortunately, became the recipe for instability, the death of democracy and the absence of any semblance of good governance. Africa has paid and is still paying an intolerable price for these man-made disasters. The unlimited power of the heads of State who became Presidents for life undermined the structure of the State, and the institutions crumbled.

Whether the causes of conflicts are internal or external, the truth remains that more than 7 million Africans have perished in 32 wars, and we have nearly 10 million refugees and internally displaced persons in post-colonial Africa. This situation cannot endure, as this was not the dream of the founding fathers of the OAU. Hopefully, quite a number of conflicts are being resolved. The inter-Congolese dialogue is now scheduled to take place on 25 February 2002 at Sun City in South Africa, and the implementation of the Framework Agreement in the Comoros with elections in April also illustrates that patience is critical in the search for the resolution of conflicts. In West Africa, as many other speakers have pointed out, the improvement is visible, and peer pressure seems to be effective.

The OAU has utilized its Central Organ of the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution with a fair degree of efficacy. The management of conflicts has taken various forms, and the OAU has adopted innovative mechanisms that have been more or less successful.

The Southern African Development Community (SADC) has a Protocol on Peace, Security and Defence, which has an organ to deal with conflicts in the subregion. SADC is determined to avoid conflicts in the region and to use the organ as an instrument for this purpose. We believe that whatever bad or negative happens in one Member State impacts adversely on all the other Members. In this respect, it is the duty of every Member to protect the region from tension and conflicts.

With regard to the conflict in the Great Lakes region, SADC invited Uganda and Rwanda to a recent Summit meeting in Blantyre, although these two States are not members of SADC. Getting all the parties directly involved in the conflict around a table greatly helps, in our view, in confidence-building and instilling an element of trust among the concerned parties.

The urgent establishment of an effective and workable early warning system is of paramount importance with regard to conflict prevention. Dealing with a full-blown conflict consumes too many resources, which we in Africa can ill afford. We have in Africa a reservoir of eminent leaders and former heads of State who can be entrusted with the task of surveying the continent and detecting signs of potential tension. No conflict or war gets started overnight. It should be possible to intervene before it is too late.

The diagnosis is clear and unchallenged. Other speakers have catalogued the appalling statistics, and I do not propose to travel over the same ground. Africa is trapped: poverty, disease, conflicts, HIV/AIDS and a multiplicity of other problems demonstrate the magnitude of the task that we face in Africa. The population picture will be significantly altered as a result of HIV/AIDS, with additional dangers to regional peace and security.

The most significant development in recent African history was the decision taken by the OAU at the 1998 Algiers Summit to deny recognition to any Government which came to power through unconstitutional means. That concept is now an integral part of the Constitutive Act of the African Union. The message is unambiguous and unchallengeable. That is not to say that the provision is

by itself sufficient to guarantee transparency in the peaceful transfer of power through free and fair elections, but it does deal a terminator blow to coups d'état, whose impact on the present state of affairs in Africa has yet to be studied.

The setting up of a special war crimes court in Sierra Leone is significant for two reasons. First, it provides the victims of atrocities with the prospect of justice and the certainty of punishment for the offenders, irrespective of status or any other consideration; and secondly, it sends a message that crimes will not be forgotten and that the era of impunity has come to an end.

Our experience in Africa has shown that heads of State cling to power because of the fear of what an incoming Government could exact from them by way of retribution or vengeance. In such circumstances they are prepared to go to any length to remain in power. This problem must be addressed in a dispassionate and objective manner: we consider that Africa is mature enough to guarantee any outgoing head of State a minimum of personal security as well as adequate resources to lead his life in a dignified manner.

We have embarked on a new paradigm for Africa. Elections which are free and fair are regularly held; Governments that lost elections have transferred power peacefully; institutions are being revitalized; an independent and corruption-free judiciary and anti-corruption tribunals and bodies are being set up all over the continent; the rule of law is gaining at the expense of presidential fiat; the economy is being liberalized; the challenges of globalization are being appraised realistically; the emergence of civil society and human rights groups, free media, global communications and gender programmes; an enhanced role for the private sector; and the involvement of all State and non-State actors in the development process: that is news coming out of Africa every day.

We do not accept that the destiny of Africa is poverty and despair. We are determined to escape that cycle. We have a vision of an Africa which is rid of conflicts and which is engaged in reconstruction — not only of bridges and infrastructure but also of a new mindset by which we will not continue to view the rest of the world as the source of our difficulties. We must claim ownership of our difficulties so that we can also claim ownership of our successes. We cannot do it on our own. We need assistance and support. There is a new brand of leadership in Africa which means what it says. The New Partnership for Africa's Development and the Constitutive Act of the African Union contain commitments and targets.

We urge the Security Council to be seized of the concerns of Africa and to ensure that follow-up action pursuant to its resolutions is taken in time. Here, we welcome the statement made this morning by Baroness Amos of the United Kingdom, that Africa would be made the focus of the United Kingdom presidency next July.

I now resume my functions as President of the Security Council.

The next speaker is the representative of Egypt. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Aboul Gheit (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): It gives me great pleasure, Sir, to convey to you the sincere congratulations of His Excellency Mr. Ahmed Maher El Sayed, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Egypt, on your country's assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for this month. We appreciate your presiding over this important meeting and your personal interest in organizing it. Since Mr. Maher El Sayed was unable to accept your generous invitation to participate in this meeting, it is my honour to deliver this statement on his behalf, given the importance and priority of the issue before us for the Government of Egypt.

(*spoke in English*)

The Secretary-General of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and its current Chairman have both spoken eloquently before this august Council on behalf of our continental organization and its member States. They highlighted the priorities on which the international community must focus in the coming period and the challenges that we must overcome in accordance with our collective responsibilities and duties under the Charter. It is for that reason that I would like to confine my statement to a number of specific remarks in terms of what we expect, or hope for, from the Security Council.

But before doing so, I would like to take this opportunity to recognize that the United Nations, through its organs and agencies, has indeed come a long way in re-establishing the primary role it played in Africa after the end of the cold war and revitalizing

its performance in the numerous fields that have made it an indispensable partner of the continent. We have seen that the United Nations is indeed capable of displaying the required political will to contribute to the resolution of three of Africa's most destructive conflicts: those in Sierra Leone, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and between Ethiopia and Eritrea. We have seen how it has become the primary advocate in the struggle to eradicate the combined scourge of HIV/AIDS and malaria in Africa, and we have seen how it can play a pivotal role in harmonizing the many initiatives aimed at promoting Africa's economic and social recovery and at helping the continent to help itself.

While those efforts are certainly welcome and appreciated, we must, however, ask ourselves whether the United Nations could in fact do more, and it is from that perspective that I would like to make the following specific remarks. First, the Security Council must not shy away from assuming its responsibilities in terms of addressing the various conflict situations that afflict the continent, and it must display the necessary political will in a uniform, consistent and non-selective manner, irrespective of the magnitude of the challenges that lie ahead. The Council must, first and foremost, implement what it has already pledged to do with regard to Africa, as reflected in the declaration adopted by the Council at the level of heads of State or Government in September 2000 (resolution 1318 (2000), annex).

It is from this standpoint that we find that the Security Council's approach towards Africa has been lacking in uniformity and has been plagued by selectivity; given the interrelated nature of many of Africa's problems, there is no reason why the Council should be so eager to resolve the conflict between Ethiopia and Eritrea while ignoring the conflict in neighbouring Somalia; there is no rationale for the Council to play a primary role in the Democratic Republic of the Congo while assuming a secondary one in the Central African Republic to its north and in Burundi to its east; and there is no justification for the Council continuing its pivotal activities with respect to Sierra Leone while neglecting the growing insecurity within neighbouring Liberia and along that country's borders with Sierra Leone and Guinea. For the Council to be truly responsive to Africa's needs, it must display the needed enthusiasm and take concrete measures commensurate with all of Africa's conflicts, and not just with some of its challenges.

Secondly, while we are all in agreement that the Organization of African Unity, the various subregional organizations and individual African States have to assume growing responsibility for tackling their own problems and resolving their own conflicts, we must also be in agreement in affirming that Africa's efforts should in no way allow the United Nations in general or the Security Council in particular to abdicate their responsibilities towards the continent.

We have all, as Member States, conferred upon the Council the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. Accordingly, this responsibility must be exercised throughout Africa no less vigorously than it is being exercised in Afghanistan, East Timor, Kosovo, Bosnia and elsewhere.

The Organization of African Unity (OAU) has played its part to the best of its ability. Through its Mechanism for the Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution, it has undertaken a number of wide-ranging tasks. The OAU has been, and is still, deeply involved in efforts to resolve conflict and reduce tensions in the Comoros, Angola, Somalia, the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and elsewhere. There is, however, a limit to what the OAU can attain, and it is thus incumbent on the Security Council not only to support the efforts of the OAU and the various initiatives undertaken by Africans at the regional and subregional level, but also to assume the primary responsibility when Africa is unable to bear the heavy burdens that accompany peace-making, peacekeeping and peace-building efforts.

Thirdly, while there is clearly a need to objectively define what Africa expects from the United Nations and what the United Nations expects in return from Africa, there is also a need to institute a practical mechanism of consultation between the United Nations and the OAU. Such a mechanism already exists between the secretariats of the two organizations; it is now time to institute a similar one between the OAU and the Security Council. It was as recently as December 1999 — at the end of a similar meeting organized by the Council and presided over by the Minister of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs of the United Kingdom — that the conclusion

was reached to try and institute regular and more structured consultation and coordination between the Council and the OAU and regional bodies.

Suggestions put forward at the time included joint envoys and missions; staff exchange; working groups; and more regular meetings between the Security Council, the OAU and subregional bodies. Egypt believes that these conclusions are no less valid today than they were two years ago. The presence of Mr. Essy today is a welcome example of what can be done in this vein. Here we would suggest, as a first step, that the Security Council also involve representatives of the OAU in the missions it dispatches to Africa. Perhaps the planned mission of the Council to Ethiopia and Eritrea in February can serve as a useful opportunity for putting such a mechanism into practice.

Fourthly, the OAU certainly has little capacity to assume responsibility for peacekeeping; that is one area in which we feel that the Security Council should reassert its responsibility. While the OAU has been able in the past to deploy limited missions to a number of regions, the leaders of Africa clearly recognized, as long ago as 1993, that those conflicts that deteriorate to the extent of requiring collective international intervention and policing, the assistance or, where appropriate, the services of the United Nations will be sought under the general terms of the Charter.

While we have come a long way since that recognition, and while the United Nations has shown some inclination to assume its responsibilities through establishing and deploying operations such as the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone, the United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea and the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, there is still an evident degree of hesitation on the part of the Security Council to assume its full responsibility in establishing operations in Africa when they are required, with the mandates they require and in the strength and size that they require.

We are all in agreement that there has to be a minimum degree of peace for United Nations Blue Helmets to keep, but at the same time there will certainly be instances when the Council will be confronted with challenges in which it must take the calculated risk of deploying operations in conflict situations where there may be little peace to keep, but where operations may nonetheless assist in the implementation of a peace agreement or prevent a massive humanitarian crisis. In this context, the Council's response to the crisis that erupted in Sierra Leone in May 2000 is one that we hope will be emulated, should a similar challenge arise elsewhere in the continent.

Fifthly and lastly, the tragic events of 11 September have left many in Africa sceptical and afraid that the international community may lose interest in the continent, changing its priorities and aspirations to others that may be deemed to be more immediate in nature. While we are confident that this will not be the case — as this important meeting amply demonstrates — we should also stress that the most effective way of ensuring that Africa remains the partner that it is in the global fight against terrorism lies in ensuring that Africa is a prosperous, peaceful and stable continent where terrorism will never find a home.

While we certainly find no justification whatsoever in resorting to military means to target any African State in the context of the ongoing response to the events of 11 September, we feel that the way ahead should focus on two priority areas. The first is assistance in the implementation of the OAU Convention on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism, adopted at the Algiers Summit in 1999. Here, we feel that the Counter-Terrorism Committee established by Security Council resolution 1373 (2001) can play a useful role through a structured mechanism of interaction with the OAU. The second is the full and integrated implementation of the New Partnership for Africa's Development, as it is only through the alleviation of poverty, the inducement of economic growth and the promotion of sustainable development throughout Africa that we will be able to eradicate the root causes in which terrorism finds fertile ground to breed.

The President: I thank the representative of Egypt for his kind words addressed to me on behalf of his Minister.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Spain. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Arias (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): I should like, on behalf of the European Union, to commend you, Mr. President, for your timely initiative in organizing this meeting at such a historic moment, as

we witness the transformation of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) into the African Union and the establishment of a new plan for the recovery of Africa. I also want to welcome His Excellency Mr. Amara Essy, the Secretary General of the OAU, and to thank him for his statement. His statement to the Council represents a further step towards strengthening cooperation between the OAU and the United Nations.

Africa is a priority for the European Union. Proof of this, and evidence of the extreme importance of this meeting, is the presence here today of His Excellency Mr. Javier Solana, the High Representative of the European Union for the European Union Common Foreign and Security Policy, to whom I have the honour to yield the floor.

The President: I call on Mr. Solana.

Mr. Solana (*spoke in Spanish*): It is a great honour for me to be able to participate, on behalf of the European Union, at this important meeting that has been rightly convened — in an open manner — by the President of the Security Council. I should like to thank you, Mr. President, as well as each and every member of the Security Council.

Before embarking on the subject on which I would like to share my views, I should like to express my deepest sympathy and condolences to the victims and the families of the victims of the disasters that recently occurred in Goma and Lagos.

Europe cares about Africa. Europe has a commitment to Africa. For reasons of geography, history and shared values, Europe has a genuine concern for Africa's future. Consequently, Europe has an active policy towards Africa that is built around three essential pillars. I would like very briefly to talk about these three pillars, which are the essence of our policy towards Africa.

The first of the pillars is our commitment to dialogue with Africa. The European Union maintains a deep and rich commitment towards the countries of Africa, both directly and through the United Nations. The clearest example of this may be our contractual commitment to the countries of sub-Saharan African through the Cotonou Agreement. The European Union has already earmarked €12 billion for the coming five years, together with €1.7 billion in loans that the European Investment Bank has committed to make. The Agreement will allow us to focus on poverty alleviation, strengthening the political dimension of our partnership and increasing the role of civil society.

We welcome the establishment of the African Union, and I would like to note with satisfaction that the European Union, and the mechanism through which it was built, may have served as an inspiration and a model. We stand ready to provide concrete support and to share all our experience in regional integration. We will continue to help and support the Organization of African Unity (OAU) Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution. We are now considering a European Union contribution to the OAU Peace Fund, which would complement the already substantial contributions being made by some European Union member States.

I should like to take this opportunity to highlight the presence here today of my good friend Mr. Amara Essy, Secretary-General of the OAU, and to commend him for the important role that his organization plays, most notably at present in the conflict between Ethiopia and Eritrea and also in connection with the Democratic Republic of Congo. We wish to build on the OAU's achievements by securing a firm commitment of the parties in conflict to implement their international obligations. Such implementation, unfortunately, is now well overdue. In more general terms, we could all benefit from closer cooperation between the United Nations and the OAU. But this must work both ways; in other words, there is a need for more United Nations support for the OAU, and, for its part, the OAU must also reach out more to the Security Council.

We also attach great importance to our dialogue and cooperation with subregional organizations on the continent. We would highlight, in particular, the Southern African Development Community, the Economic Community of West African States and the Intergovernmenta. Authority on Development. They are clear evidence that Africans today are assuming their share of the responsibility for securing peace and stability on their continent. The sense of African ownership can function effectively only when other countries and the United Nations also help to enhance African institutional capacities and closely cooperate with Africa.

In crisis management and post-conflict peace-building, it is very important that all parts of the United Nations system work together. Among other things,

this means that the Security Council must cooperate fruitfully — as it already does — with the parties and the economic and social parts of the United Nations system itself.

The European Union is fully committed to working as closely and intensively as possible and at all levels with the United Nations system. This collaboration has been especially intensive with regard to the critical situations in the Great Lakes region, the Horn of Africa and the West Africa region. Furthermore, as many have said throughout this meeting, we need strong international action on the illicit trade in arms, the ruthless exploitation of Africa's resources, the use and abuse of child soldiers and the continued use of anti-personnel mines.

Starting with the Africa-Europe Summit, held in Cairo in April 2000, we have established a strategic partnership between the European Union and the entire community of African States. This has come to be called the "Cairo process", and it has become a useful forum for discussing matters of mutual interest and for giving the broadest possible support for future close relations.

The second pillar of our policy is to effectively combat poverty, disease and conflict, to do everything possible to alleviate these problems. Throughout today's meeting, enormous figures have been cited. I do not want to repeat them all. I would only say that 340 million Africans live on less than €2 a day. That figure gives us all not only food for thought, but also grounds for action. We are also aware that poverty is also undoubtedly a cause of conflict. It must therefore be recognized that combating poverty and frustration also means fighting against the causes of conflict.

The European Union is not just talking about these issues. We are working actively to address them. We are the world's leading source of development and humanitarian assistance in Africa, providing more than two thirds of total official development flows to sub-Saharan Africa. Out of a total contribution of €1.8 billion to the Global AIDS and Health Fund, more than €1 billion has been contributed by the European Union and its member States. The European Union attaches great importance to this year's Monterrey Conference and to the Johannesburg Summit, and we are actively participating in their preparation and working towards their success.

Integrating Africa into the world economy is an essential part of the fight against poverty. It requires continued, persistent and tenacious action at all levels. The European Union's "Everything but arms" initiative on duty- and quota-free access for imports from the least developed countries is, we believe, an important step. It is my fervent hope that other countries will follow with similar concrete measures in the same direction.

The European Union has identified poverty as a fundamental cause of conflict in Africa. That is why we place such emphasis on poverty alleviation. But we are well aware that our strategy cannot be based on one element alone. Rather, it must be a mix of various policy options that vary from one country to another. Therefore, cooperation with all mechanisms, in particular, the Organization of African Unity and subregional organizations, seems to us to be an absolutely fundamental element in combating poverty and its consequences by means of conflict prevention.

However hard we work in attacking the roots of conflict, we must also be realistic. Sometimes prevention will fail. We must be prepared to manage crises. We must therefore be ready to do so in an integrated and coherent manner, capable of deploying humanitarian aid and the full range of political, economic, financial and, where necessary, military means. The European Union is making significant efforts to equip itself with all the capabilities required to effectively manage crises. In doing so, we are working closely with the Secretary-General of the United Nations and with the Security Council to ensure that our efforts are as coherent as possible in all of these areas.

The third pillar of our policy is our attachment to certain fundamental values: democracy, the rule of law, human rights and good governance. We consider it fundamental to have the essential commitment to democracy, good governance and human rights. This commitment is not optional. It cannot be undertaken at times and not at others. It must be permanently applied because we believe that these values are essential for development.

These are not values imposed from outside, but values that Africa herself has embraced. Two years ago, the OAU adopted the principle that governments that came to power through military coups could no longer expect to be welcome in its forums. This change

in policy was welcomed as a sincere change in attitude towards all those values that we are all defending. The international community also needs to be tough on those who openly violate democratic principles and the rule of law. Because of this, our common commitment and interest in defending and promoting these values through the European Union — as was done yesterday with regard to Zimbabwe — give a clear signal of our position.

Europeans worked long and with great passion to rebuild a continent out of the ashes of the horrific World War. It took people with ambition and great political will. I wish to say that those same efforts can be seen among so many leaders of the African community, who apply that political vision and courage in building and assisting their continent to overcome its problems. A clear example of such vision is undoubtedly the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), which is guided by those principles — principles of responsibility, belonging and the feeling of ownership of the process. This is what we can see with satisfaction is occurring on the African continent. This important Initiative clearly demonstrates that Africa and Europe share the same goals and interests. A new partnership on this basis will enable Africa to reap the benefits of globalization. It will also allow the international community and Africa to get more results from what we are already doing on a daily basis.

We all have a great challenge in the success of Africa and its countries. It would contribute to creating a more just and safer world. It would reduce dependency on aid and contribute to global prosperity. The success of Africa and its countries will mean success for the entire world. The European Union should congratulate itself on this path that will undoubtedly be taken.

The President: I invite the representative of Tunisia to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Mejdoub (Tunisia) (*spoke in Arabic*): I should like at the outset to express our pleasure and satisfaction at seeing you, Sir, preside over this important meeting. I would also like to congratulate all the members of your delegation on their excellent performance during your friendly country's presidency of the Security Council during the month of January.

This is the first time my delegation has participated in the work of the Security Council since the end of Tunisia's tenure as a non-permanent member. We would therefore like to congratulate the new members of the Council — Bulgaria, Cameroon, Guinea, Mexico and the Syrian Arab Republic — on joining the Council. We wish them full success in their task. Also allow me to welcome Mr. Amara Essy, Secretary General of the Organization of African Unity, to the Security Council.

We express our thanks, Sir, to your delegation for preparing the valuable document that has been distributed to us. It covers very important questions dealing with the challenges that the African continent continues to face. The document also defines the responsibilities of the international community, including the United Nations and the Security Council, towards the current situation in Africa.

It is known to all that the African continent is undergoing more suffering than any other region of the world. The African continent includes the majority of the least developed countries, among them, the most heavily indebted. Many areas of the African continent suffer abject poverty, while others are theatres of armed conflict, where one conflict flares up as soon as another is extinguished. Deadly diseases and epidemics such as AIDS claim thousands of Africans every day. The continent is also host to the largest number of refugees and internally displaced persons in the world. Small weapons flow into the continent at alarming rates, while its natural resources continue to be plundered and smuggled.

It is only fair to acknowledge that in the past few years the Security Council has made many efforts to resolve the problems of Africa. The question that must be answered frankly and honestly is, why does this situation persist despite all the initiatives and efforts to promote Africa? In Tunisia's view, the answer can be summarized as follows.

First, those initiatives were not consonant with the specific cultural, social, economic or political needs of the continent and they lacked the resources necessary for their implementation. Secondly, we feel that the cooperation and coordination between the Security Council, the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and the subregional African organizations in dealing with the questions before the Security Council,

as provided for in Chapter VIII of the Charter, has been limited.

Thirdly, in our view, there has been a lack of timely intervention by the Security Council, as well as a lack of timely adoption of necessary measures to deal with conflicts and crises in some African regions. We also note that even when the Security Council intervenes, its mandates for some peacekeeping operations and the resources made available to them are inappropriate and inadequate for dealing with the situation on the ground. It is also clear that, due to the strategic, political and economic importance of a country or region where a conflict is taking place, some interested parties greatly influence the Security Council's decision on whether or not to intervene in that particular conflict. Many questions, despite their importance and gravity, such as the question of Somalia, remain almost absent from the Council's agenda.

Fourthly, we feel that there is a lack of proper consideration of the regional aspect of a given conflict. This happens although the facts show that many of the conflicts in the African continent can have ramifications and repercussions that make it imperative to deal with them comprehensively and from a holistic perspective.

Fifthly, we believe that the Security Council sanctions have had limited effectiveness in directly or indirectly influencing parties to the conflict. Indeed, experience shows that the arms embargoes imposed on some African countries and some non-State parties in certain conflicts have failed to produce the desired effect. These sanctions could not even stem the flow of weapons. Somalia is the best proof of this. As for economic sanctions, we believe that the application of such sanctions in Africa, particularly in some of the least developed countries, will in the medium and long term merely increase tensions and instability in those countries.

Sixthly, we believe that preventing conflicts, stopping them from flaring up repeatedly and eliminating their root causes, particularly the economic roots, are not given the requisite attention by the parties intervening. This occurs despite the fact that all parties, including the Security Council, acknowledge the close interrelationship between security, stability and development. Moreover, resources allocated to conflict prevention and peace-building activities — if they exist at all — are extremely limited and hardly commensurate in most cases with the desired objectives.

In our opinion, these are the major shortcomings that have prevented the bolstering of the foundations of security and stability in Africa. These are the very points that Tunisia affirmed the need to address during our tenure on the Security Council. How can we address such shortcomings, and how can we help Africa overcome its crises? Our reply to this question is not at all easy in view of the numerous and varied challenges facing Africa today. However, we are hopeful that today's debate will produce some useful and practical ideas in helping us find the necessary answers.

For our part, Tunisia believes that the following measures should be adopted. First, African capacities should be strengthened in the field of peacekeeping, conflict prevention and peace-building through the training of troops and the enhancement of the relevant regional structures of Africa. Secondly, there should be sound and effective coordination and consultation among the international bodies, especially the Security Council, the OAU and African subregional organizations in order to guarantee that the specific characteristics of each African situation are taken into account. In this regard, Tunisia proposes that the Security Council consider the initiation of a direct and regular dialogue with the OAU Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution. This morning the OAU Secretary-General, Mr. Amara Essy, put forward a similar proposal, and we fully support it. We believe that such a dialogue could bring the Council to a closer understanding of the African realities. It could enable both the Council and the OAU to formulate joint plans that would respond to the imperatives of the situation under consideration. In order to help achieve this objective, we would also suggest that the Council increase its field missions to the areas of conflict in Africa. It would also be useful to conduct joint missions of the Council and the OAU to areas of conflict and tension in the continent, with a view to understanding the situation on the ground and formulating appropriate strategies to deal with them.

Thirdly, we believe that in order to renounce the culture of reaction and move towards adopting a culture of conflict prevention, all necessary resources must be made available to contain hotbeds of tension and to build peace. All interested parties ought to

coordinate among themselves, in accordance with their respective abilities and specialities, through unified and comprehensive strategies. All have now come to understand that the concepts of peacekeeping and peace-building are simply too large to confine to the mere deployment of troops in one country, or the disarming or demobilizing of combatants. Experience has shown in some African regions, such as West Africa and the Great Lakes region, that building security and stability in one country cannot be achieved without first achieving stability in neighbouring countries.

Fourthly, for all the reasons I have mentioned previously, there is a need to review the use of sanctions, particularly economic sanctions, as an instrument of deterrence.

Fifthly, sufficient attention must be paid to the importance of preventing the flow of small arms and light weapons to conflict regions in Africa. In this respect, we should focus on countries that produce and export such weapons. Tunisia proposes that we consider establishing an international mechanism to monitor the sources of such weapons and their routes to regions of conflict. We also assert that the Security Council must devote the same level of attention it accords to the question of the flow of small arms and light weapons to the issue of the illegal exploitation of the natural resources of the African continent.

Sixthly, unconditional support and assistance must be provided to the New Partnership for Africa's Development. We believe that ensuring the success of this promising initiative is a collective responsibility that must be assumed by the entire international community, regardless of how heavy a burden it may represent. The international community, with all its components and institutions, must realize that no matter how many sacrifices and efforts the African countries and peoples make to win the struggle for development, peace and stability, they will not be sufficient to raise Africa from its current marginalization.

Tunisia stresses the need for an effective and regular follow-up to today's debate. This can be achieved by making the situation in Africa a standing item on the Security Council's agenda. The international community, including the United Nations and the Security Council, is today called upon to move from words to concrete action vis-à-vis the African continent.

The President: I thank the representative of Tunisia for his kinds words addressed to me.

May I crave the Council's indulgence by asking speakers to be as brief as possible, because we need to finish on time and to give all speakers on my list the chance to speak.

The next speaker on my list is the representative of Bangladesh. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Chowdhury (Bangladesh): We are encouraged that you, Sir, should chair this debate. Mauritius has so ably led the Council this month, for which much credit is owed to our friend Ambassador Jagdish Koonjul and his team. Let me also complement the President of the Economic and Social Council, Ambassador Ivan Šimonović of Croatia, who, by his effective participation here today, underscored the relationship between the two sister Councils.

Let me join you, Sir, in welcoming the statement made by Secretary General Amara Essy of the Organization of African Unity (OAU). He has provided us with an insight into the challenges confronting Africa and also, broadly, into how the region hopes to confront them. Appreciation is due to Deputy Secretary-General Louise Fréchette for presenting the outlines of cooperation between the United Nations and the OAU.

The high-level representation of both Council and non-Council members in today's meeting demonstrates the importance we all attach to the situation in Africa. Bangladesh, has had the privilege to date to coordinate the group of least developed countries, which includes 34 countries from Africa. We therefore cannot but identify ourselves with African issues, which find such resonance in our heart, whether they be about cooperation or about conflicts. While cooperation is beginning to mark many intramural regional groupings in Africa, it is its strident conflicts that still attract our attention.

Two such conflicts in the Great Lakes challenge the United Nations and the African leadership: those in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and in Burundi. We believe that, in both cases, peace is possible if regional actors can be persuaded to cooperate, to compromise and to take bold decisions.

The Security Council obviously cannot resolve these alone. Its resolutions are not implemented automatically. The role of the regional and subregional organizations is critical. That was also so in the case of the conflicts between Ethiopia and Eritrea and in Sierra Leone; it remains so in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and in Burundi. The making of peace in the two volatile and embattled subregions — West Africa and the Great Lakes — has figured prominently on the Council's agenda.

One significant lesson we have learnt from our membership of the Council is that it is hard pressed to maintain peace and security alone, its mandate notwithstanding. Based upon that realization, we often called upon and sought help from other organs, such as the Economic and Social Council; the funds, programmes and agencies of the United Nations; the Bretton Woods institutions; civil society, including non-governmental organizations; and, most of all, regional and subregional organizations. All these stakeholders need to play their roles and make their contributions, especially in Africa.

Africa has dominated the agenda of the Security Council in the past few years. Individual African conflicts representing peacekeeping, conflict prevention and post-conflict peace-building scenarios demanded constant action and follow-up. Bangladesh sought to make its positive contribution in this regard during the period of its membership. For instance, during our presidency in March 2000, the Council issued a presidential statement in document S/PRST/2000/10 on post-conflict peace-building that focused on disarmament, demobilization and rehabilitation (DDR).

An issue we have confronted has been the question of the financing of DDR. The dependence on voluntary contributions to such a critical component of peace-building remains a dilemma before us. The importance of a predictable, adequate and sustained funding of DDR has been demonstrated in Sierra Leone. This will certainly confront us in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Burundi. The question returned to the Council last February.

Earlier this month, Sierra Leone celebrated the end of one of the bloodiest civil wars in Africa. Bangladesh rejoiced with the people of Sierra Leone. As the largest contributor of peacekeepers to the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone, it was gratifying for us to see the war end, particularly so because we sent our Blue Helmets in the face of adversity when the military and political situation, if viewed objectively, would have dictated otherwise. As Chairman of the Sierra Leone sanctions committee, Bangladesh took the initiative to break the nexus between diamonds and the conflict. We are pleased to have been able to make this significant contribution to peace in Sierra Leone.

I mention the case of Sierra Leone in particular because it represented a test case for United Nations peacekeeping; because it demonstrated the crucial importance of the role of the regional actors; and because it proved that, given the political will, the United Nations can succeed in its peace and security missions even in the most complex situations.

Going beyond the apparent purview of the Security Council, I should like to place this meeting in the broader context of some of the most recent and upcoming events. The Fourth High-level Meeting on Cooperation between the United Nations and Regional Organizations, held last February, focused on post-conflict peace-building. The Council addressed this issue only a day before the Meeting and expressed support for the initiative to hold the High-level Meeting, which came after a two-and-a-half-year interval.

The Secretary-General, if I may recall, identified five areas of cooperation with regional organizations: negotiating and implementing peace agreements; promoting security and stability; working for good governance, democratization and human rights; promoting justice and reconciliation; and finding a better way to combine emergency relief with longer-term development assistance. We would expect a progress report at the fifth conference, but if such exercises as the Council's resolutions and presidential statements are to be more meaningful, progress will need to have taken place.

The Meeting also had a report on conflict prevention, outlining steps taken since the Third Meeting in 1998. The two missions — post-conflict peace-building and conflict prevention — are deeply interrelated. In fact, post-conflict peace-building, which involves the challenges of reconciliation and reconstruction, is aimed at preventing the recurrence of conflict. The world's attention was specifically drawn to conflict prevention by the Secretary-General's June

2001 report. Bangladesh had the privilege to play a lead role in ensuring due follow-up by the Council, leading to the adoption of resolution 1366 (2001).

The report of Secretary-General on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa identified a number of areas for action. The Council was prompt in adopting a series of resolutions — 1196 (1998), 1197 (1998), 1208 (1998) and 1209 (1998). These instruments require systematic follow-up. The international community has not always matched commitments in Africa with corresponding action in terms of follow-up and implementation. That partly explains the tragedies of present-day Africa.

In addressing conflict prevention, we recognized once again that many of the conflicts are rooted in endemic poverty and underdevelopment, weak or non-existent institutions, the absence of good governance, and gross and systematic violations of human rights. This recognition inevitably leads us to what was underscored at the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, in Brussels last year. The Brussels Declaration and Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010 represents the commitment of the international community to address the socio-economic challenges facing the 49 most impoverished countries, 34 of which, as I said before, are in Africa.

Africa needs capacity-building to take advantage of the market access opening up to them. The Integrated Framework for capacity-building in trade, coordinated by six international agencies — the United Nations Development Programme, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the World Trade Organization (WTO), the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development and the International Trade Centre — must be put in place immediately. To benefit from trade, one must have the wherewithal to conduct commerce. Without this, for Africa, the outcome of the Doha WTO Ministerial Meeting will be meaningless and poverty will remain a threat to peace.

Civil wars have created the world's largest arms bazaar across Africa. As a killer, small arms rival HIV/AIDS. The adoption of the Programme of Action on Small Arms has been a major achievement. If implemented, it can make a great difference to African lives.

The records of the past are mixed and often disappointing. The future appears more promising. We recognize several new initiatives. Two major world conferences — both important for Africa — on this year's calendar are the International Conference on Financing for Development, in March, and the World Summit on Sustainable Development, in September. Within Africa, we have noted a number of initiatives — the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Council of Ministers, in February; the Organization of African Unity (OAU) Council of Ministers, in March; and the OAU Summit, in July. The New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) is another major undertaking. However, care must be taken that their results are implemented. Africa's margin for tolerance of failure is inexorably shrinking.

Africa, and the cause of peace and progress, must receive priority attention in all of these forums. We must ensure that Africa is the meeting point of our global and international efforts.

I would like to conclude my remarks with one appeal, concerning refugees and internally displaced persons. Last year, the Council held a debate with Mrs. Sadako Ogata, drawing special attention to the humanitarian situation in Africa. The daily ordeal of the men, women and children uprooted from hearth and home, humiliated and persecuted, tells a horrendous tale. Let us recognize their problems and call for an end to their sufferings. Let this Council meeting be a watershed that will make a difference in their lives. Let us bring to fruition to the confidence expressed so long ago by the Roman general Pliny the Elder that "Ex Africa semper aliquid novi" — "There is always something new out of Africa".

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Cuba. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table.

Mr. Rodríguez Parrilla (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): We feel very honoured by your presence among us, Mr. President, and extend to you our warmest welcome. I would like to take this opportunity to commend Ambassador Jagdish Koonjul and his team for the excellent way in which they have led the work of the Security Council over the month. In addition, we would like to thank the Secretary-General of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), Amara Essy, for

his participation and valuable presentation at the beginning of this debate.

There is much wisdom and experience among the leaders and representatives of Africa. No one knows their problems better than they, and no one is in a better position to determine the best solutions. Africa does not need lessons; rather, it needs economic development. What it requires are not recipes or adjustment programmes, but rather financial resources, official development assistance, debt forgiveness and the support of the United Nations.

Debates such as the one we are holding today are undoubtedly valuable. At the same time, it is clear that the attention given to the situation in Africa goes well beyond the exclusive jurisdiction of the Security Council and extends to other bodies both inside and outside the United Nations. The Presidents of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council should be permanently invited to take part in these debates, since both bodies include attention to the situation in Africa as an important item on their agendas. We would also like to welcome the presence of Ambassador Ivan Šimonović, President of the Economic and Social Council, at this meeting.

We appreciate the recent attempts of the Security Council to gain a better understanding of conflicts in Africa. More debates on this issue are taking place, more missions are being sent to the field, and direct contacts are being held more often with the main protagonists of the conflicts, through private or public meetings.

Furthermore, African conflict-settlement mechanisms have been developing in recent years, and, though it is still insufficient, cooperation has increased among the United Nations, the OAU and subregional organizations in Africa. However, much remains to be done. It is a cause for concern that, despite what is reiterated in debates and stated in resolutions, the emphasis continues to be placed on reaction to conflicts, not prevention.

The quest for peace and security requires development and the elimination of poverty. There can be no peace without development and no development without peace. Nor do the current working methods and composition of the Security Council — a body in which the developing countries, including the African nations, are severely underrepresented — contribute to giving effective attention to the African problems. How can it be explained that Africa, whose conflicts occupy most of the Council's agenda, does not have a single representative among its permanent members? That is one of the reasons why we insist on a thorough and urgent reform of the Security Council.

The report of the Secretary-General to the Millennium Summit states that most of today's wars take place in the developing world. It is an indisputable fact that there are more armed conflicts in Africa than in any other continent. Twenty per cent of Africans live in countries severely affected by conflicts. More than a half of the deaths caused by war in the world take place in Africa, where there are also millions of refugees and displaced persons.

The proportion of people living in extreme poverty continues to grow in Africa, with nearly 50 per cent of its population living on less than a dollar per day. Thirty-four of the 49 least developed countries are located on the continent. While Africa accounts for 18.5 per cent of the world's population and has vast natural resources, its share of the world's gross national product is merely 1 per cent, and its share of global trade is only 2 per cent.

Africa has an illiteracy rate of 41 per cent — the highest in the world. It has only 1.8 per cent of the world's telephones, 1.3 per cent of its computers and 0.6 per cent of its Internet users — and half of the latter are concentrated in a single country. How could one expect that, in such a situation, the continent would be able effectively to face the challenges posed by a global economy which is increasingly knowledge-based?

Africa is the only region in the world with declining school attendance: 100 million African children never go to school. In addition, Africa's debt accounts for 110 per cent of its gross national product. Indeed, since 1985 the International Monetary Fund has received more funds from sub-Saharan Africa than it has lent to it, and that trend continues to intensify.

Africa spends more money on debt servicing than on health and education combined — this in a world in which official development assistance represents only 0.22 per cent of gross national product, the lowest level in the last 10 years.

We reiterate that the foreign debt of African countries must be canceled, without conditions or

demands. That debt has already been paid off more than once.

Another serious threat to sustainable development in Africa is HIV/AIDS. Two out of three people infected with HIV/AIDS, and nine out of 10 people who die of AIDS in the world, live in Africa. There are as many deaths due to AIDS in sub-Saharan Africa as would result from the dropping in that region of more than 70 nuclear bombs such as the ones used against Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

We cannot overlook the historical origins of the African crises: the pernicious role played by the colonial and neo-colonial powers, who engaged in slavery, fostered division, drew arbitrary borders, encouraged tribal conflicts, plundered natural resources and sold all manner of weapons, among other things.

Today these powers have the moral obligation to counteract the consequences of their actions. The prevalence of an unjust and unsustainable international economic order, which continues to use Africa as the main source of wealth to serve the unsustainable consumerism of industrialized countries, is also among the factors that shape this situation.

Cuba is linked to Africa by very deep historical bonds of friendship and solidarity. To a large extent, we owe the formation of our nationality to the African countries.

More than 80,000 Cuban civilian workers have lent their assistance to Africa; almost 25,000 of them have been medical doctors, dentists, nurses and health practitioners. From 1961 to 2001, a total of 29,686 African youths graduated from intermediate and higher-education programmes in Cuba, more than 1,100 of them in the area of health care. Today, 2,803 African students from almost 40 countries are benefiting from education programmes in Cuba. The cost of their studies is fully covered by our Government.

The comprehensive plan for health in Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean that Cuba began some years ago already covers 11 African countries and will be extended to others. This programme, under which 831 Cuban health workers currently provide free medical care in the beneficiary countries, has also been supported by other countries, such as France, Japan, Germany and South Africa, as well as by several non-governmental organizations. In various African countries, Cuba has also set up medical schools and brought Cuban professors to several African countries — also free of charge.

As a specific response to the spirit of cooperation required by the complex situation existing in Africa, Cuba reiterates today the offer made by President Fidel Castro during the Millennium Summit to send 3,000 medical specialists to provide their services, free of charge, in sub-Saharan Africa, and even to establish the necessary infrastructure for the widespread administration of anti-retroviral treatments, if the industrialized countries provide the necessary drugs and resources.

We emphasize the fact that these vital drugs are required on a massive scale, including AIDS drugs, and that they cannot continue to be protected by patents. One cannot profit from the lives of human beings.

I would also like to reiterate here the offer made by Cuba at the special session on AIDS. Cuba made a commitment to place at the disposal of the poorest countries, especially of those most affected by AIDS, the following.

First, Cuba would provide 4,000 medical doctors and health personnel to set up the necessary infrastructure to provide the population with the necessary drugs, prescriptions and follow-up. That same staff could in turn train a large number of specialists, nurses and health technicians in the countries where they work.

Cuba would also provide professors to set up 20 medical schools to train 1,000 medical doctors every year in the countries that require it the most. It would also provide medical doctors, teachers, psychologists and the other specialists required to advise and cooperate with prevention programmes against AIDS and other diseases; the necessary diagnostic equipment and kits required for basic prevention programmes; and anti-retroviral treatment for 30,000 patients.

Cuba would not profit at all from this and would contribute the costliest part — that is, the salaries of the staff and specialists willing to carry out this mission.

It is now time to take action. We offer our experience, in a spirit of modesty, and only as an example of what can be done with true spirit of cooperation on the part of all.

The President: I thank the representative of Cuba for the kind words he addressed to me.

The next speaker is the representative of Côte d'Ivoire. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Djangoné-Bi (Côte d'Ivoire) (*spoke in French*): It is both an honour and a privilege for me to take part in this high-level meeting of the Security Council, in this first month of the year 2002, to engage once again in an exchange of views on the situation in Africa.

I should like to take this opportunity to thank you, Mr. President, for the kind invitation you addressed to your Ivorian counterpart, Mr. Aboudramane Sangaré, who, unfortunately, was unable to attend this meeting because of previous commitments. I should like also to express the satisfaction of Côte d'Ivoire at the excellent initiative you have taken in inscribing on the Council's agenda the item on the situation in Africa.

Moreover, I am pleased to welcome the presence here and the statement made by the Deputy Secretary-General, Ms. Fréchette, representing the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, whose commitment to Africa and to finding solutions to its problems is well known to, and appreciated by, my country.

I am also pleased and proud to see Mr. Amara Essy, Secretary General of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), at this high-level meeting, where he is being called on to speak about Africa's problems. Who could be in a better position to tell us about Africa's situation and its prospects at this time of transition between the OAU and the African Union, when the international community is focusing its attention on other challenges?

Lastly, I should like to welcome the presence of the President of the Economic and Social Council and to commend all of the members of the Council for their willingness to address the African cause. I would be remiss if I did not extend my congratulations to the representatives of Cameroon and of Guinea, as well as to the other new non-permanent members of the Security Council, and to say how delighted we are to see them join this very important decision-making body of the United Nations. They can rely on the cooperation of the Ivorian delegation.

This meeting of the Council on the situation in Africa is being held in a very special context, because it is the first of this magnitude since the tragic events of 11 September 2001. In the wake of those sad events, we have appreciated the way in which the Council was able to deal with the delicate questions raised by terrorism. Indeed, it was in a spirit of responsibility and a climate of calm that the Council responded, to the great satisfaction of all.

The various resolutions that it rapidly adopted, which unreservedly condemned acts of terrorism and advocated appropriate measures in order to effectively fight this scourge, have demonstrated once again how great its willingness is to respond to the expectations of the international community and how important it is for actions to be taken comprehensively to stem any evil that threatens international peace and security.

We are gathered here again to address the situation in Africa in a single day. That is a genuine challenge, even if we only choose certain important points. We also incur the risk of having an exchange of platitudes, since the subject has been so much rehearsed during recent decades in all international forums and bodies.

Indeed, who has not heard reference made, concerning the African continent, to such subjects as the substantial increase in official development assistance, debt alleviation, the improvement of access for African products to the markets of developed countries, and so on and forth. These subjects have been repeated endlessly, but without any real, lasting application on the ground.

At the Council's request, the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, has published excellent thematic reports on the situation in Africa, including particularly the one on the causes of conflicts in Africa and the means to address them, in order to achieve peace leading to sustainable development, for the benefit of African peoples and the international community.

Questions such as those related to refugees and displaced persons, for which African has set the sad record, HIV/AIDS, cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity (OAU), to cite only a few, have been discussed and examined thoroughly in the Council. Resolutions or recommendations clearly indicating the ways and means to the solutions for African problems have been

adopted. Despite all this, it seems that we are still at square one.

One may wonder under these circumstances why it is that the Council is dealing with the situation in Africa in an almost cyclical way, as if it were only to clear its conscience. Yet one cannot accuse the Africans themselves of not having taken positive and far-reaching steps to meet the challenges they face.

In response to any criticism one can point out that Africa has been working resolutely for several years to find solutions to its numerous political, economic and social problems. Tangible results have been achieved in the area of conflict resolution, thanks to the action of eminent African statesmen and leaders. In this context, we can recall Presidents Nelson Mandela and Quett Masire in the cases of Burundi and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and President Abdelaziz Bouteflika in the case of the Ethiopian-Eritrean conflict.

In the West Africa subregion, the leaders of the Economic Community of West African States have spared no effort, despite great obstacles, to ensure that peace is gradually restored to the region, where areas of tension threatened the existence of countries like Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea-Bissau. Naturally, all these encouraging results have been achieved with the appreciable and appreciated help of the United Nations.

Dialogue and cooperation, chosen as a means of resolving problems without inopportune foreign intervention, are beginning to bear fruit today. My country, Côte d'Ivoire, expresses the wish that other countries affected by conflicts should adopt this path, in keeping with the recommendations of the reports of Secretary-General of the United Nations on the causes of conflict in Africa.

This approach, which was established by the Africans themselves to resolve their political problems, honours African tradition and must be welcomed and encouraged by the international community. It demonstrates, moreover, that the continent is indeed an entity that is viewed by its own leaders as being unified and that the heads of State are ready to hold a constructive dialogue among themselves, regardless of the disputes that separate them, provided that all agree to work for the benefit of the African people. The international community must have trust in them and assist them sincerely, without ulterior motives.

Efforts in the search for solutions to political problems, particularly concerning conflicts, are also evident in the economic and social spheres.

It is no secret to anyone that Africa and its leaders are actively seeking to create mechanisms to manage domestic reforms and to strengthen good governance. The building and the maintenance of democracy are crucial not only for the maintenance of peace and stability within States, but also because this contributes to combating other evils. Today there are very few African States that are not moving towards pluralistic and democratic systems of government.

The African context has changed a great deal in general terms. The evolution of political leadership is a source of optimism. Efforts for good governance are genuine, and, even if much remains to be done, certain progress has been achieved in the sphere of combating poor management of public administration.

Democracy takes root slowly but surely. The era of single parties is over, and it is worth noting the establishment of a civil society aware of its responsibilities. Indeed, democracy is not the business only of Governments. It also involves establishing a culture at the level of the citizen and the entire civil society of a country.

It is, however, clear that democratization cannot flourish in a climate characterized by poverty. As Maurice Duverger said, "Democracy is also a matter of purchasing power". In other words, to be real and lasting, this democratization needs development and, consequently, the readiness of the international community to sincerely assist this continent. We cannot persuade Africa to engage in democratization solely by brandishing conditionalities that are often poorly adapted to the daily realities of the African people.

The evolution and the developments that I have referred to require that the international community as a whole make a very firm and long-term commitment. Without peace and the cessation of pernicious conflicts, as far as political issues go, there can be no security or stability and, above all, no development. Neither can there be any question of victory over poverty nor the full integration of the African continent into international life.

According to the estimates of the United Nations, 52 per cent of the people living on less than $1 per day are found in Africa. In the last decade, there has been a

substantial decrease in resources provided to the United Nations for its activities in the region. Likewise, flows of official development assistance for Africa fell from $23.4 billion in 1994 to $15.3 billion in 1999. Foreign investment in Africa has stagnated at less than 5 per cent of all investments made in all developing countries.

The African continent, it must be recalled, comprises 20 per cent of the world population. However, it represents only 3.5 per cent of the world gross domestic product and 1.5 per cent of world exports. In order to achieve the objectives of the Millennium Declaration to reduce poverty by half between now and 2015, experts tell us that African countries must experience an annual economic growth rate of 7 to 9 per cent.

We in Côte d'Ivoire are convinced, along with the Secretary-General, in order to help Africa defeat poverty, strike a skilful balance between financial assistance, debt alleviation and improvement of access to the markets of developed countries, as well as appropriate and ongoing support for efforts to diversify the African economy.

In the social sphere, the Security Council is aware that 25 million of the world's 36 million HIV-positive individuals are Africans. The scourge of HIV/AIDS thwarts Africa's development plans because it particularly strikes young people and, according to the experts, affects educational systems throughout the continent. It is well known that in some African countries the epidemic has hit teachers at such a pace that it is no longer possible to replace them.

Here too, the outcome of the work on HIV/AIDS by the General Assembly — which on the initiative of the Secretary-General has set up a Fund to wage an effective war against this scourge, especially in Africa — awaits implementation by the international community. Moreover, who here has not heard this cry of despair: "The disease is in the south, but the medicine is in the north"?

Last July the Secretary-General called upon the G-8, meeting at Genoa, to contribute to the world fight against AIDS by providing the main financing for the Global Fund established to that end. The Secretary-General noted that the Fund was far from reaching its goal of between $7 billion and $10 billion a year. And Mr. Annan expressed the hope that everyone — Governments, civil society, foundations and others — would join the fight against AIDS, which is a pandemic of appalling proportions, especially in Africa. Here, we should recall that already, at Abuja, Nigeria, Africa decided to devote approximately 10 per cent to 15 per cent of African Government budgets to combating AIDS.

Here as elsewhere, Africans are striving to create conditions in which they can take charge of their own future. They do not admit to the "Afro-pessimism" that they are accused of. Africans are more than ever determined to take the future of the continent and its inhabitants into their own hands.

It was in the awareness of this reality that, by creating the African Union, Africa devised for itself a new political structure that takes account of the new challenges.

The New Partnership for Africa's Development, which the international community has rightly welcomed, is an ambitious programme by Africans for Africans and their foreign partners. Without going into the details, let us understand that it is aimed at restoring peace, security and stability to the continent, promoting good governance and effective leadership, finding ways to achieve healthy growth and sustainable development, reducing poverty and inequality, and rehabilitating and rebuilding the infrastructure that is indispensable for the well-being of the peoples of Africa.

Those ambitions are in line with the African continent's legitimate hopes for the twenty-first century. The United Nations must heed African initiatives and be patient with a view to formulating and promoting suitable programmes and to engaging in a constructive search for the means to back up those initiatives. The United Nations should be Africa's primary partner in considering the implications of the implementation of the New Partnership for Africa's Development. That initiative was designed to be based on strong, tangible partnerships.

Côte d'Ivoire remains convinced that these great enterprises — the establishment of the African Union and the implementation of the New Partnership for Africa's Development — will in future years be viewed as the "constitutive act" of the development of Africa.

It is no longer time for statements of intent: everyone knows all the plans and programmes relating to the situation in Africa and the solutions that are

needed. Most of them were formulated with the help of the United Nations and its agencies and institutions. We must now assess their implementation, along with that of all the resolutions and recommendations adopted by the United Nations and other international institutions, to see what has been done, what has not been done and the reasons for the inaction with respect to a continent about whose many ills everyone is sorry, and whose peoples feel that when it comes to them the international community often does the minimum possible or is even completely indifferent.

Now, it is time to work openly with Africans so that Africa can play a larger role on the international stage. Let us heed Africa's message to us, for that message gives good reasons to believe that a better future for the African continent is possible. Once Africans themselves are determined, Africa's partners should help make Africa's renaissance and recovery a reality.

Let us reflect on the eloquent words spoken by the British Prime Minister, Mr. Tony Blair, in his recent speech at Brighton:

> "The state of Africa is a scar on the conscience of the world. But if the world as a community focused on it, we could heal it. And if we don't, it will become deeper and angrier."

Let us make sure that we contribute now to a process that will enable Africa to heal its wounds and take total control of its future.

The President: I thank the representative of Côte d'Ivoire for the kind words he addressed to me.

The next speaker is the representative of Japan. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Haneda (Japan): Mr. President, I would like to express, on behalf of the Government of Japan, our appreciation for your leadership in convening this debate. I would also like to thank the Deputy Secretary-General, Ms. Louise Fréchette, and the Secretary-General of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), Mr. Amara Essy, for their statements. In particular, we appreciate Mr. Essy's briefing on the OAU strategy for addressing the current situation of Africa as well as on the OAU's process of transition into the African Union.

Despite the tremendous efforts they have made so far, African countries are still confronted by numerous obstacles which can pose a threat to peace and stability in their own lands. Japan recognizes that internal peace, security and stability are prerequisites for achieving sustainable development in any society or economy, and that good governance plays a critical role in that regard.

From that perspective, Japan welcomes the decision on the transition from the OAU to the African Union, which was adopted at the OAU Summit held in Zambia last July. As the decision emphasizes, the major role of the African Union will be the promotion of peace, security and stability as well as good governance throughout the African continent, based on democratic principles and institutions and on popular participation. Thus, the success of the African Union will depend largely upon its ability to maintain peace and security throughout the continent. Japan is confident that under the able leadership of Mr. Essy the important task of transforming the OAU into the African Union will be successfully achieved. We will spare no effort to support him in that task.

While the decision on the African Union and the Union's Constitutive Act provide a new framework agreement for the governance of its member countries, the document on the New Partnership for Africa's Development, also adopted at the July OAU Summit, provides policy orientation for the activities of the African Union. Japan recognizes that the adoption of the New Partnership has significance for the sustainable development of Africa.

First, the fact that various African development plans which had been submitted by several African leaders were coordinated and amalgamated into the New Partnership is a demonstration by Africans of their ownership of the peace-building and development process.

Secondly, the major thrusts of the New Partnership — to strengthen the ability of African countries to prevent, manage and resolve conflicts and to anchor democratic governance on solid economic foundations — constitute an approach that is essential if African countries are to participate fully in the global economy.

For these reasons, Japan believes that NEPAD, with its important policy framework for the peace and sustainable development of African countries, and the

African Union, as its implementing organ, deserve the strong support of the international community.

Japan has hosted two Tokyo International Conferences on African Development (TICAD) since 1993, with a view to mainstreaming African issues on the agenda of the international community and to supporting the initiatives of African countries themselves to resolve those issues so that they can participate fully in the global economy. Last December, Japan hosted a ministerial-level meeting in Tokyo in preparation for TICAD III, to be held in 2003. The meeting focused on how TICAD might strengthen its coordination with NEPAD, and adopted the chair's statement, which cites several important areas for cooperation. The first relates to strengthening the foundation for development through the promotion of peace and good governance; the second to investing in people, with a focus on human resources development, education and the health sector; and the third to reducing poverty through economic growth.

In addition, South-South cooperation — particularly between Asia and Africa, as well as among African countries — regional cooperation and cooperation in the area of information and communication technology were also recognized as important approaches to be taken in promoting African development.

Looking ahead to TICAD III, Japan will continue to strengthen its cooperation with African countries and, will, in close cooperation with Secretary General Essy, support the African Union and NEPAD.

The President: I thank the representative of Japan for the brevity of his statement.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Nigeria. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Apata (Nigeria): Nigeria is very pleased to see you, Mr. Minister, personally presiding over these important deliberations of the Security Council. Your presence is a demonstration of your personal commitment, and that of your Government, to ensure that, at the dawn of a new millennium, Africa embarks on the rapid socio-economic transformation of its societies and is no longer an item on the agenda of the Security Council.

We welcome the various ministers who addressed the Council this morning. Their presence — particularly the presence of those from outside the continent — testifies to the commitment of the international community to assist Africa in tackling various problems it faces. On behalf of the Nigerian delegation, I thank them for their contribution to this debate.

Nigeria warmly welcomes the newly elected members of the Council: Bulgaria, Cameroon, Guinea, Mexico and the Syrian Arab Republic. We also welcome the Secretary General of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), His Excellency Mr. Amara Essy. Nigeria aligns itself with the thrust of the statement he gave this morning.

On behalf of the Nigerian delegation, I wish to thank those delegations that have expressed condolences to our Government and our peoples on the recent tragic events in Lagos. We appreciate those expressions of support.

For many States on our continent, the promises of prosperity remain unfulfilled, 40 years after independence. In fact, many parts of the continent are characterized by poverty, decaying infrastructure, the scourge of HIV/AIDS and conflict situations. In the face of these challenges, African leaders have embarked on serious efforts aimed at finding lasting and sustainable solutions to key problems of socio-economic development. The efforts of President Bouteflika, which brought about the end of the Ethiopia-Eritrea conflict; those of the leaders of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in addressing the problems of the Mano River Union; those of the leaders of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) in seeking the peaceful resolution of the conflicts in Somalia and the Sudan; and those made in the context of the Lusaka peace process in relation to the conflicts in Angola and the Democratic Republic of the Congo are some of the exemplary steps taken by our leaders in trying to rid Africa of conflict situations. The successes achieved so far in Sierra Leone, Burundi, the Central African Republic and Guinea-Bissau are largely due to their peacemaking efforts. We salute their perseverance and achievements. While it is "not yet Uhuru" in these countries, we nevertheless acknowledge that significant progress has been made towards sustainable peace.

We recognize that our continent is the weakest link in the global chain. This recognition, among other factors, prompted African leaders to redouble their

efforts at the dawn of a new millennium to move Africa out of external debt, conflict situations, preventable communicable diseases and poverty. The New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) is therefore a bold and imaginative initiative on the part of our leaders to accomplish the objective of transforming African societies in the political, social and economic domains for the sole purpose of improving the lives of our peoples. While they accept that the primary responsibility for accomplishing this huge task is theirs, they also recognize that they cannot do it alone, particularly in this era of globalization. That is why the emphasis is on partnership — partnership between Government and non-governmental organizations; partnership between public and private sectors; partnership between Government and all segments of society and — this is of crucial importance — partnership between Africa and the international community.

In this regard, it was very instructive when those leaders declared that they would no longer allow themselves to be conditioned by circumstances, resolved to determine their own destiny and invited the rest of the world to complement their efforts. We therefore invite the international community to complement them in a profound and transparent manner.

Nigeria, which chairs the Implementation Committee of NEPAD, is determined to facilitate the early realization of the objectives that are very much at the heart of NEPAD. They include: strengthening the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution at the regional and continental levels; promoting and protecting democracy and human rights in their respective countries; restoring and maintaining macro-economic stability in their economies by ensuring discipline in the implementation of fiscal and monetary policies; promoting the development of infrastructure, agriculture — including its diversification into agro-industries — and manufacturing to serve both domestic and export markets; and revitalizing the educational and medical training institutes, giving high priority to tackling the problems of HIV/AIDS, malaria and other communicable diseases.

On the issue of cooperation with regional organizations, Nigeria commends the efforts of the Security Council in building the necessary level of synergy with ECOWAS, IGAD and the Southern African Development Community in the prevention and resolution of conflicts in their respective subregions. However, we urge the Security Council to intensify its support for the various regional initiatives in the maintenance of peace and security in Africa.

In order to strengthen the existing cooperation between the United Nations and the OAU, the Nigerian delegation urges that greater assistance be given by the United Nations to the OAU Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution, and appeals for financial and logistical assistance to subregional organizations in order to enhance their effectiveness. Nigeria endorses the use of inter-disciplinary fact-finding and confidence-building missions to volatile regions, and particularly commends the visits of the members of the Security Council to conflict areas in Africa, as well as the utilization of the services of special envoys by the United Nations Secretary-General in addressing conflicts on our continent.

The outstanding contribution of such mediators as former President Nelson Mandela is an affirmation of the raison d'être for the continuous use of eminent personalities as mediators.

We also welcome the establishment of the United Nations Office for West Africa. In our view, this will facilitate cooperation and collaboration between the United Nations, ECOWAS and leaders of our subregion, particularly in the area of peace and security.

The Secretary-General, in his report entitled "The causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa", drew attention to the importance of economic sanctions and arms embargoes as an effective tool for conflict prevention and resolution. Our experience has shown that conflicts are stimulated, prolonged and sustained by the proliferation of small arms and light weapons and illegal exploitation of natural resources. We strongly support the outcome of the Conference on Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons. We invite the Council to study this report and explore how the recommendations and conclusions could be implemented in our efforts to prevent conflicts.

The decision by the Security Council last year to impose sanctions on illicit diamonds and other natural resources emanating from such conflict areas as Sierra Leone, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Angola is an important measure that will hopefully

contribute positively to the peace process in these countries. However, the Council is urged to always take into account the views of subregional leaders prior to the imposition of sanctions on any country or countries, group or groups and individual or individuals in their subregion. The high-level consultations between the members of the Security Council and the ECOWAS ministerial Mediation and Security Committee last year, prior to the imposition of sanctions on Liberia, are commendable, and the Council is urged to institutionalize such an approach in its working methods.

Finally, Nigeria is of the view that warlords and their cohorts who have committed crimes against humanity, should be brought to justice under international law. Nigeria's support for the Special Court in Sierra Leone is anchored in the strong conviction that bringing such criminals to justice will send an important message to those who may harbour similar intentions that they would not escape justice. We appeal to the Council to ensure that this Court is funded from the regular United Nations budget rather than through voluntary contributions.

The President: The next speaker on my list is the representative of Sierra Leone. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Kamara (Sierra Leone): It is a pleasure for my delegation to join others in congratulating you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of January. Please allow me also to congratulate the new members of the Council: Bulgaria, Cameroon, Guinea, Mexico and the Syrian Arab Republic.

Allow me also at the outset to extend my delegation's profound condolences and sympathy to the Governments and the peoples of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Republic of Nigeria for the loss of lives and mass destruction of property due to the recent volcanic eruption in the Congo, in Goma, and the ammunition-dump explosions in Lagos, Nigeria.

I would like to commend the delegation of Mauritius for its initiative to convene this open meeting devoted exclusively to the situation in Africa. Coincidentally, two years ago, the month of January was described as "the month of Africa" in the Security Council.

The guidelines for today's meeting suggest that notwithstanding the interest that the Council has shown in the past, we are not getting the desired overall result for solving Africa's problems. It appears that most parts of Africa are in a state of permanent crisis. Therefore, my delegation believes that this meeting is timely. It provides another opportunity for the Security Council to take stock of recent developments and possible shortcomings that affect the continent, and to remind the international community that Africa is still part of our interdependent world.

We agree that it is necessary for the Council and the international community to refocus attention on Africa. The reason is clear. We are at the stage where Africa's problems — serious problems that still result in considerable loss of human lives on a daily basis — could be submerged in the flood of other developments on the international scene. We agree that the Security Council should be more proactive in the search for urgent solutions to the problems facing the most disadvantaged continent in the world today.

The guidelines for this meeting raise a number of pertinent questions. Allow me to focus on two, which in the view of my delegation, are germane to the issue of why the Council and the international community have not achieved the desired results as far as Africa is concerned. First, why are the responses of the international community, including the Security Council, in addressing African conflicts so slow? Secondly, what has been the international community's response to intra-State instability and other conflicts in Africa, and what actions have been taken to prevent such outbreaks?

Let me briefly examine these two questions in the context of the situation in my country, Sierra Leone. Just over a week ago, with the assistance of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL), the process of disarming some 42,000 ex-combatants was completed. It was a remarkable accomplishment. For this we are grateful. It has laid a solid foundation for peace and stability not only for Sierra Leone but also for the West African subregion.

But the question is, could the international community have responded earlier to the critical situation in Sierra Leone and helped save the lives of thousands of people? Could the Security Council and the international community have acted much earlier to save the limbs of thousands of victims of rebel

atrocities over the past 11 years? These are some of the questions President Kabbah had in mind when, in his address to mark the end of the demobilization process in Sierra Leone, he said,

> "We must confess, though, that there were times in the course of the armed conflict when many of our people thought that we were being abandoned, or that our cry for help was perhaps not loud enough to prod the world to provide the quality and quantum of response that our precarious situation required."

Judging from the gravity of the situation and the humanitarian emergency facing the country, the response was, if not late, then relatively slow. On several occasions the Security Council commended the efforts of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the ECOWAS Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) in Sierra Leone, and appealed for resources, including much-needed logistical support to help ECOMOG maintain an effective peacekeeping presence in Sierra Leone. The response was inadequate and often slow. Indeed, we recall that at one crucial stage the withdrawal of ECOMOG posed a serious security problem for us.

On the humanitarian side, the incidence of rebel atrocities could have been greatly reduced if the international community had responded to the crisis much earlier. We recall that on one occasion, following reports of rebel atrocities, the Security Council hinted that all allegations of such violations should be investigated with a view to bringing the perpetrators to justice. In Security Council resolution 1313 (2000), UNAMSIL was mandated, among other things, within its capabilities and areas of deployment, to afford protection to civilians under threat of imminent violence.

One wonders whether, if such assurances of civilian protection had been given, in 1998, for example, we would not have helped save the limbs of innocent Sierra Leoneans, including nursing babies, who subsequently became victims of gruesome acts of amputation and mutilation.

Also on the humanitarian aspects of the conflict, we recall that responses to consolidated appeals for assistance often fell short of their targets.

The situation in Sierra Leone, typical of what prevails in many other conflict areas of Africa, has taught us that the concept of intra-State conflict is misnamed. Most of the so-called civil or internal conflicts are international in character and dimension. This is because the conflicts continue to be fuelled and financed by international networks of illicit arms traders and the illicit transfer of diamonds and other precious minerals. The principal beneficiaries of these illegal transactions are thousands of miles from the theatres of the African conflicts.

So, there is an international responsibility for curbing the flow of illicit arms to Africa. The curb itself is a contribution to conflict prevention. Unless the international community, led by the Security Council, deals effectively with this purveyor of death and terror, as we have witnessed in Sierra Leone and other parts of Africa, there can be no stability or peace in our continent.

Using the experience of Sierra Leone as an example, I would like to conclude by stressing the role of the Security Council in peace-building. Peace-building is also a means of conflict prevention. Armed conflicts could flare up again if the international community fails to provide timely and adequate resources for the reintegration of ex-combatants.

Based on our own experience in the area of conflict, we suggest that the Security Council establish — and, where they exist, strengthen — monitoring mechanisms for the implementation of arms embargoes and take the lead in ensuring that small arms and light weapons are not transferred to non-State entities.

Secondly, we suggest the Council support the dispatch of more United Nations missions for inquiries or fact-finding in potential conflict areas as early as possible, to investigate, inter alia, any breaches of international humanitarian law.

Thirdly, the Council should strengthen peace-building efforts by mandating appropriate measures that would empower relevant United Nations bodies to provide adequate and timely resources not only for disarmament and demobilization, but also for the reintegration of ex-combatants.

This meeting should send a strong reminder to the international community that Africa should not be forgotten. In the midst of a rapidly changing international environment and global responses to changes, we should not forget Africa and its problems.

Responses to the questions posed in the guidelines for this meeting suggest that the problems that confront Africa, numerous as they are, are well known. What we need now is a speedy global response to those problems. And I emphasize the words "speedy" and "global".

The President: I thank the representative of Sierra Leone for his kind words addressed to me.

I now invite the representative of Canada to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Heinbecker (Canada) (*spoke in French*): Nearly half a century has passed since the majority of African countries saw the day when Africans regained responsibility for their own affairs. Much progress has been made since then. Infant mortality rates have steeply declined since the 1950s, even if they have not fallen as much or as rapidly as before. Life expectancy has also advanced, even if the advances made require further efforts and have started to be undermined by HIV/AIDS. Africa has seen the rate of school attendance at the primary, secondary and university levels rise considerably, surpassing the international rates of increase at the three levels. The literacy rate for sub-Saharan Africa has almost doubled over the last thirty years, even if there is still much to be done.

But the continent's share of the gross world product has fallen radically despite the fact that the portion of the world's people living in Africa has almost doubled over the last half century. Africa's per capita gross domestic product has stagnated despite a half century of efforts. Several reasons explain those disappointing economic results. But conflicts are the most obvious cause. Africa is tragic proof of the colossal costs of conflicts left unchecked.

(*spoke in English*)

Angola, Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Liberia, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Somalia and Sudan are all tragic stories of "de-development", caused at least in part by conflict. And Zimbabwe must be on our watch list. In fact, conflict affects directly or indirectly half the countries in sub-Saharan Africa. Conflict is responsible for more death and displacement than famine or flood. Only HIV/AIDS, itself worsened by conflict, is exacting a worse cost. One African in five lives daily with conflict or civil war. Civilian casualties increase year by year and now far outstrip those in any other region of the world. About 19 million refugees and internally displaced persons live in Africa. They are both the cause and an effect of conflict.

These statistics are distressing and the effects of these conflicts on Africa are devastating. But the indirect effects are equally striking: health and education systems disrupted, diseases such as HIV/AIDS out of control, agriculture abandoned, economic growth stalled, investment delayed, and the promotion and protection of human rights, democratic development and good governance undermined.

Countries caught in conflict daily lose ground to the rest of the world, contributing to the marginalization of Africa as a whole. In this distressing context, it is especially encouraging that African leaders have themselves said "Enough" and have summoned the political will and the policy resources to launch the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), a strategy by Africans for Africans. In NEPAD, African leaders both forthrightly acknowledge the extent of the problems affecting Africa and their corrosive effects on the nations and people of Africa, and squarely state their determination to act.

By NEPAD, African leaders undertake to strengthen mechanisms for conflict prevention, management and resolution at the regional and continental levels and to ensure that these mechanisms are used. The NEPAD document is one of leadership and vision. It makes clear that the economic and social marginalization of Africa is inimical to global stability. Such marginalization diminishes and endangers us all. NEPAD puts the onus on Africans to act to end that marginalization. But it also issues a call to others for partnership, and Canada supports that call fully.

At the Genoa Summit last July, the G-8 welcomed NEPAD. G-8 leaders indicated support for the key themes of NEPAD and established a group of personal representatives to develop a G-8 response. I am happy to tell you that the leader of that group of G-8 personal representatives is my predecessor, Bob Fowler, who was the Permanent Representative of Canada to the United Nations and is well known to many people in this room.

Under the chairmanship of Canada this year, NEPAD will be a principal focus of discussion at the June 2002 G-8 summit in Kananaskis, Alberta. G-8 leaders will also appropriately respond to the tragic events of 11 September, without, however, displacing

Africa from their agenda. At Kananaskis G-8 leaders will adopt a concrete plan of action to respond to the invitation of African leaders to partnership in an African owned and led development process.

The goal is to put a new partnership in place that will unlock much greater resources, public and private, over time. In its December budget, the Government of Canada committed $500 million Canadian — over $300 million United States — in support of the G-8 Africa initiative. On Friday of this week, Prime Minister Chrétien will come to New York and will address African issues before the global business leaders who will be here for the World Economic Forum.

As for the United Nations and the Security Council, much effort has been expended on Africa, and much of it successfully, despite the criticism one hears in this forum, sometimes legitimate and sometimes exaggerated.

Much has been done both to prevent and to respond to crises in Africa. Action is better than reaction, and prevention is worth the proverbial "pound of cure". We would urge all Council members to support the innovative suggestion that an informal working group of the Council be established to discuss prevention issues on a regular basis and, especially, to consider early warning cases referred to it. The use of both Council missions and inter-agency fact-finding missions has proven its value, and we welcome the Council's commitment to these tools.

The great risks and the exorbitant costs — human and financial — of taking action after violent conflict has erupted are perhaps the best incentives for acting to prevent conflict in the first place. When prevention fails, our duty to protect civilians begins. Nowhere is this more pressing than in Africa.

The Secretary-General's two reports on the protection of civilians and the Council's two resolutions, 1265 (1999) and 1296 (2000) on this same subject warrant intense follow-up by the Council. The challenge is to transform the intentions found in these resolutions, as well as in 1261 (1999) on children and 1325 (2000), the ground-breaking resolution on women and peace and security, and the mini-recommendations made by the Secretary-General into a programme of action and, ultimately, a record of achievement. I think it is appropriate that I underline in this Council the importance that Canada attaches to protecting civilians in armed conflict.

Mr. President, you urged us to be brief, and so if my presentation from here on in becomes a bit disjointed, it is because I am reading only some of it for the record.

In most contemporary conflicts, combatants have had an appalling record on the abuse of civilians. In this context, the Council has rightly given United Nations forces in Sierra Leone an explicit mandate to protect civilians. It should make protection of civilians a standard feature of peace operation mandates. The Council should ask itself why it is authorizing such mandates if it is not to protect the ordinary people who are being abused.

I would also like to underline the importance of addressing the situation of war-affected children. They are not just victims of today's conflicts; they are also important participants.

More broadly, we need collectively to address effectively the proliferation of small arms and light weapons. Last summer the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms made a positive, if insufficient, step forward. We need now to implement that Programme of Action, incomplete though it is, establish procedures for the destruction of surpluses, negotiate a legally binding instrument on marking, control or prohibit exports to non-State actors and, through disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) and related programmes, mop up as many existing weapons as possible and put as many combatants as possible back to work. Further, the Council should take steps to penalize transport firms, especially air transport firms, that flout Council decisions on weapons transfers. There is plenty of evidence available to the Council from the Angola and other sanctions reports to show who the violators are. Countries that harbour these violators ought to be brought to this Chamber before the Council to explain why they are still doing that. The acid test for the protection-of-civilians agenda has always been whether the commitments would be honoured or the recommendations by the Secretary-General adopted. We therefore welcome the Secretariat's intention to revisit its own performance, and we would encourage the Council to do likewise.

I would like to say a word about economics. We need to get at the economic fuel that fires so many

conflicts, and that economic fuel is natural resources. In Africa, to paraphrase Klausowitz, war has become economics pursued through other means. Whatever the original causes of these conflicts, it is economics that perpetuates them and blocks peace. To a citizen of a country like Canada, to which natural resources have brought so much evident benefit, it is especially distressing that African resource wealth should be a curse for so many Africans — not a blessing — and a cause of violence and despair. We fully support the efforts being made by this Council and by the international community at large to end these abuses.

Regional organizations such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC), and the Organization of African Unity (OAU) itself, have critical roles to play. Canada has been a member of the Friends of the OAU group, who have supported the OAU restructuring process. One area of particular interest mentioned by others is that of regional security, and in particular the OAU Conflict Prevention Mechanism.

This Conflict Prevention Mechanism provides a foundation for the kind of security architecture found in some other regions, which permit them to address with confidence and among equals the security problems they face. This Mechanism provides real value added, as demonstrated by a supportive President Bouteflika in his reaching a peace accord between Ethiopia and Eritrea. We are particularly pleased to see that this Mechanism is to be preserved intact in the transition from the OAU to the African Union.

The most solemn duty of Governments is to protect their own citizens. The most basic responsibility of the United Nations is to help those Governments help their people. Let us pledge to work together to acquit our common duty to restore peace and stability throughout Africa. Let the long-suffering people of Africa make progress. They deserve the opportunity to go further and to raise their standard of living further to global norms. It is possible. It is necessary. And it is urgent.

The President: I still have seven speakers inscribed on my list. I am sure that Council members will understand that there are quite a number of commitments this evening — I myself have some. If the Council members agree — and I hope you will agree — I intend to suspend this meeting now and to resume it tomorrow at 4.30 p.m.

I wish to inform the Council that the informal consultations on the Middle East will be convened following the conclusion of our discussions on the situation in Africa, which will, hopefully, be around 5.30 p.m. I also wish to inform members that the Secretariat has confirmed that the live webcast of the Council's proceedings on this particular item will also be provided tomorrow. I hope that no one will object to the suspension of this meeting, and I thank you for your understanding.

The meeting was suspended at 7.30 p.m.